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Products harmful to health and the environment

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The question of the exchange of information on banned hazardous chemicals and unsafe pharmaceutical products was first considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session, in 1979. In its resolution 37/137 of 17 December 1982, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale Have Been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments[1] on the basis of the work already being undertaken within the United Nations system.

2. In its resolution 39/229 of 18 December 1984, the General Assembly decided, inter alia, that an updated Consolidated List should be issued annually, and that the data should be made available to Governments and other users through direct computer access to it. In accordance with this, the format of the List has been kept under continued review in cooperation with the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, with a view to its improvement, taking into account its complementary nature, the experience obtained and the views expressed by Governments. In accordance with the same resolution, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly at its forty-first session and every third year thereafter, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the above resolutions. In its resolution 44/226 of 22 December 1989, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make suggestions on ways and means of providing technical assistance, particularly to developing countries, for strengthening their capacity to utilize the List, and to study all pending issues, including sustainable alternatives to banned and severely restricted products and unregistered pesticides. In its resolution 1998/41 of 30 July 1998, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to continue to focus the List on chemical and pharmaceutical products in alternate years, with the same frequency in publishing it in all official languages, as adopted in previous General Assembly resolutions.

3. The present report, covering the sixth triennial review of the Consolidated List, is prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolutions. It provides an overview of major developments since 1998 regarding harmful products and their effects on human health and the environment, and makes proposals on the possible impact of these developments on the format, content and coverage of the List. The report also indicates changes that may affect its production and distribution.

4. The present report was prepared based on contributions provided by a number of organizations of the United Nations system.

II. Review of the Consolidated List

A. Arrangements for the production of the List

5. In 1985, the United Nations Secretariat, in close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the then United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC), now named UNEP Chemicals, met at their first inter-agency coordinating meeting,[2] and carried out the first review of the Consolidated List. The review focused on arrangements for the preparation of future issues, the need for criteria for determining the inclusion of products, the question of the legal and public health context of regulatory actions that had not been included in the first issue of the List, and the treatment of commercial data. As a result of the review, a memorandum of collaboration, outlining the division of responsibilities among WHO, UNEP Chemicals and the United Nations Secretariat, was agreed upon. Since the first triennial review, the arrangements for the production of the List have remained essentially the same. More detailed information on adjustments made to the List has been outlined in previous reports of the Secretary-General.[3] Therefore, only most recent adjustments are outlined in the present report.

6. Following agreements reached at consultations held during the periodic inter-agency coordinating meetings, it was decided in 1995 to divide the Consolidated List into two parts, each being published in alternate years, one focusing on pharmaceuticals and the other on chemicals. The sixth issue of the List, the first under the new arrangement and containing information on pharmaceutical products only, was published in 1997, and the seventh issue, currently under preparation and scheduled for publication later in 2001, will contain information on chemicals only.

7. Efforts to have the seventh issue of the Consolidated List published earlier have been hampered because of the technical difficulties encountered in the maintenance of the DOS-based computer programme used to publish the List. However, a new Windows-based computer programme is being developed and efforts continue to be made to have the seventh issue of the List ready for review by the Council at its substantive session of 2001.

B. Format, content and scope

8. Continuous review of the format and content of the Consolidated List have made it possible to expand its coverage and scope. While the List, in line with General Assembly resolution 37/137, has remained easy to read and understand, the number of products listed and the number of Governments reporting have regularly increased with each new edition of the List. Thus, the first issue of the List covered less than 500 products regulated by 60 Governments, the fifth and last issue covering both pharmaceuticals and chemicals included more than 700 products with regulatory actions taken by 94 Governments, and the sixth issue, dealing with pharmaceuticals only, contained information on 366 products regulated by 77 Governments. The seventh issue should cover well over 300 chemical products, out of which only 31 are currently included in the interim prior informal consent (PIC) procedure adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on 10 September 1998 in the Rotterdam Convention[4] (see paras. 37-42).

9. In this connection, it should be pointed out that information on a considerable number of products and related data on chemicals included in the Consolidated List has been provided by UNEP originating from a variety of sources, especially the IRPTC legal file and submissions made under the original voluntary PIC procedure. In 1995, however, UNEP ceased updating the legal file. In 1998, when the original PIC procedure was superseded by the interim PIC procedure — operated in accordance with the provisions of the Rotterdam Convention — it became apparent that virtually all the notifications of bans or severe restrictions previously submitted under the original PIC procedure did not meet the new information requirements, as set out in annex I to the Convention. Consequently, the Convention secretariat only considers as valid those notifications of bans or severe restrictions that meet the requirements of the Convention.

10. Recognizing that all pharmaceutical and chemical products are potentially harmful if not correctly used, it is worthwhile to highlight a number of considerations that may affect the contents of the Consolidated List, such as: (a) decisions taken by a limited number of Governments on a specific product may not be representative of the policy position of other Governments, particularly in view of differing risk-benefit considerations; (b) the fact that a given product is not listed as regulated by a country does not necessarily mean that its use is permitted in that country; rather, it may mean that the relevant regulatory decision to prohibit its use has not yet been communicated to the United Nations, WHO or UNEP; and (c) in the case of pharmaceuticals and pesticides, which are frequently subject to compulsory registration procedures, the product may not have been submitted for registration.

11. It should be indicated that the criteria[4] developed in 1987 governing the inclusion of pharmaceutical and chemical products in the Consolidated List significantly facilitated the screening of information included in the publication. However, the interpretation of Governments in applying, in particular, the criterion "severely restricted" continued to vary widely, leading to considerable unevenness in reporting on national restrictive measures. That situation has greatly improved with the new definitions adopted under the legally binding Rotterdam Convention. Notwithstanding that the number of products covered under the Convention is still rather limited, it would be useful to continue to provide information on identified hazardous products through the List until the process under the Rotterdam Convention can be reviewed and a decision taken on inclusion of any of these products.

12. As with previous issues of the Consolidated List, the scope of information contained in the List will remain essentially the same. The List is divided in two parts. Part I, compiled by the United Nations, WHO and UNEP, contains the text of restrictive regulatory decisions taken by competent national authorities on both pharmaceutical (monocomponents and combinations) and chemical (agricultural and industrial) products. Consumer products have been included only when they are hazardous because of their chemical composition. Psychotropic and narcotic

substances, covered by international conventions, are included only in cases where a country has notified WHO either that the substance is controlled more rigorously than is provided for under the relevant international conventions, or that the substance has been subjected to national control before being considered for international scheduling. The List does not include many widely used industrial chemicals to which occupational exposure limits have been assigned by national authorities. Information on these products is available in publications of the International Labour Organization (ILO).[5] Similarly, relevant information on food additives, which fall outside the scope of the List, is considered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission.[6] The regulatory information also includes references to the relevant legal and statutory documents in order to enable the user to ascertain the legal context and scope of the regulations. There are also bibliographic references to scientific and technical studies by international organizations relating to chemical products. In addition, the List includes an alphabetical and classified listing of products and three indexes: scientific and common names, trade/brand names and Chemical Abstract Service Registry numbers.

13. Part II of the Consolidated List presents commercial information, relating to a large proportion of the products included in part I of the List. The commercial data is compiled by the United Nations Secretariat from publicly available sources and it includes information on the manufacturers of these products and their generic and if available, the proprietary trade names, under which these products are marketed worldwide. Only the name and location of the parent company is included in the List, even when the actual producer is a subsidiary located in another country. An effort is made to verify collected commercial data with the respective manufacturer before printing the List.

14. On the issue of information related to national regulatory actions taken on pharmaceutical products, WHO regularly provides explanatory comments. These comments contain useful information reflecting the position of Governments on their regulatory actions in the light of different national priorities, thus providing context for these actions. On the other hand, UNEP and the International Programme on Chemical Safety are not able to provide similar comments on regulatory actions related to agricultural and industrial chemicals, because of the large number of products in which these chemicals appear and the many applications of such products. Also, taking into consideration that results from risk-benefit assessments and consequent decisions taken by Governments may vary widely and may not always be communicated to UNEP and/or the International Programme on Chemical Safety, it has been so far difficult for these organizations to provide comments on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of chemical products. However, in the case of pesticides and chemicals banned or severely restricted under the Rotterdam Convention, decision guidance documents, prepared by the Convention secretariat, provide detailed information including summaries of risk and benefits and reasons for regulatory action.

C. Computer access, periodicity and language versions

15. Information contained in the Consolidated List has been maintained on personal computers since the early nineties when it was downloaded from mainframe computers, and the data was transferred to diskettes in 1994 on an experimental basis. However, technical problems with the computer programme previously used to publish the List constrained the Secretariat's ability to produce these items in a timely manner. The Secretariat continues to make efforts to produce List data on diskettes/CD-ROMs with search facilities and to make them available as sales items in addition to the printed text. Now that a new computer programme is in use, the possibility of making the List available on the Internet will also be explored. While the List is a sales publication, consultations continue to be made in order to provide free of charge Internet access to the List's database.

16. Close attention has been paid to having the Consolidated List published as stipulated in General Assembly resolutions 39/229 and 44/226. While dividing the publishing of the list in two issues, one for pharmaceuticals and the other for chemicals, has facilitated the handling of large and growing databases, the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council on publishing the List in sets of alternating languages each year, with no more than three languages per year and with the same frequency for each language, has proved difficult to be implemented. One of the main obstacles includes the non-availability of

database facilities in languages other than English. Taking into consideration that the List is now separated into two parts — pharmaceuticals and chemicals — the Council may wish to review the above recommendation and consider the possibility of having each issue of the List published in all official languages of the United Nations. This would greatly assist the Secretariat in its efforts to publish the List in a timely manner in all official languages.

17. It should also be pointed out that the various databases are maintained in English and the collection, updating and modification of commercial data in the Consolidated List, also undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat, is carried out in English as well. However, under the interim PIC procedure, as well as the original PIC procedure, summaries of notifications to ban or severely restrict a chemical submitted by parties are published by the respective Convention secretariat (UNEP) in three languages (English, French and Spanish). While considerable progress has been achieved in publishing the List in English, the development of comparable database facilities in other languages would greatly accelerate the process of translating and publishing the List in other official languages and will help reduce the lag between making the List available in English vis-à-vis other official languages.

D. Dissemination and utilization

18. The Consolidated List in its two components — pharmaceuticals and chemicals — continues to present, in a unified manner, information on restrictive regulatory decisions taken by Governments on a range of pharmaceutical products and agricultural and industrial chemicals. As such, it is a recognized source of valuable information for Governments in ensuring access to information that may be useful in taking appropriate regulatory measures for the use of pharmaceutical and chemical products in the light of their particular national circumstances. Furthermore, the provision of information on trade names, under which these products are marketed, adds value to the List and makes it easier for national authorities and others monitoring such activities to identify a restricted product available in the local market. The identification of the product with its manufacturer also provides access to safety data sheets and other information available from the manufacturer. In addition, commercial data provides an easy method to cross-reference trade names with recognized common scientific names under which most regulatory information is available. Other users of the List include intergovernmental organizations, academic institutions, concerned non-governmental organizations, the media and other members of civil society. The List has thus proved to be an important tool for public interest and consumer groups in bringing to the attention of Governments and manufacturers the need to remove hazardous products from the marketplace and in raising awareness among public officials and non-governmental organizations on the health-related effects of using certain products.

19. There is a continuous increase in the promotion of the dissemination and utilization of the Consolidated List. In particular, a considerable number of concerned non-governmental organizations make constant requests to have access to the List, and these organizations provide, as well, constant feedback on the positive use of the List. For example, the Pesticide Action Network, whose objectives include the removal of the use of pesticides from the market and support to the use of safe and sustainable pest-control methods, regularly comments favourably on the usefulness and pertinence of the List. Both the International Organization of Consumers Union and Greenpeace have similarly indicated the value of the List towards the fulfilment of their activities related to the monitoring of the use of hazardous products. Consumer groups in developing countries continue to request and rely on the List to keep updated on matters related to environmental surveillance and activities for sustainable development.

20. Starting with the second edition of the Consolidated List, a questionnaire has been included in the List for the purpose of assisting the Secretariat to determine the use to which the List is being put. The List continues to play an important role in facilitating information on products, which are severely restricted or banned in some countries but are still available in others.

21. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat will undertake an in-depth analysis of the utilization of the Consolidated List immediately after the publication of the seventh issue. This analysis will be facilitated by the issuance of a full survey, which will cover both pharmaceuticals and chemicals, and will therefore be distributed to all

parties concerned with the issue of potentially hazardous pharmaceutical and chemical products. The survey will be provided to Member States, concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, consumer groups, and other members of civil society, such as the academic and the media world. To ensure that all recipients of the List will receive the survey, it will be attached to the forthcoming seventh issue on chemicals and it will be sent also to all recipients of the List interested in pharmaceuticals.

III. Developments since the previous triennial report

A. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

22. Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development[7] reflects the preoccupation and the work of the organizations of the United Nations system in the area of environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. The current work on the issue of products harmful to health and the environment is based on the principles indicated in chapter 19, which encourage increased national and international efforts for intensive international work and improved coordination of international activities. Further, chapter 19 states the need for increased coordination of United Nations bodies and other international organizations involved in chemicals assessment and management. With a view to achieving the goals of chapter 19, and more specifically those pertaining to the theme of the present report, including coordination, a number of mechanisms have been put in place for strengthening coordination at the international level. Among these, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, and the PIC mechanism, continue to realize important work on the issue of hazardous pharmaceutical and chemical products.

23. A brief summary of activities undertaken by these mechanisms since the previous report is described below.

1. Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals

24. The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals[8] has been designed to serve as a mechanism for coordinating efforts of intergovernmental organizations in the assessment and management of chemicals. There are seven participating organizations: UNEP, ILO, WHO, FAO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals provides a forum to these organizations to collaborate as partners in promoting international work related to the environmentally sound management of chemicals, within the framework of their own respective mandates.

25. An Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals brings together representatives of the participating organizations for consultations on the planning, programming, implementation and monitoring of their activities. The Coordinating Committee prepares and periodically updates an inventory of the chemical safety activities of the participating organizations. To this effect, the Coordinating Committee has established coordinating groups which provide a means for interested organizations working in these areas to discuss ways and means of ensuring that their activities are mutually supportive, to monitor progress and to identify issues of concern. These coordinating groups have dealt with issues of the harmonization of chemical classification systems, chemical information exchange, pollutant release and transfer registers, assessment of existing chemicals, chemical accident prevention preparedness and response, and identification and management of obsolete stockpiles of pesticides and other chemicals. The Coordinating Committee has direct responsibility for the coordination of the capacity-building activities of the participating organizations.

2. Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety

26. The International Conference on Chemical Safety, following a recommendation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, established in 1994 the Intergovernmental Forum on

Chemical Safety,[9] an international mechanism for cooperation in chemical safety. The Intergovernmental Forum brings together public and private stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society in efforts to arrive at policy guidance and strategies to build partnerships and enhance coordination in the promotion of chemical safety. The Intergovernmental Forum has held, since its inception, three sessions. Between sessions of the Forum a Standing Committee provides, inter alia, initial input on significant new issues to be considered by the Forum, as well as advice and assistance with regional efforts and monitoring of progress.

27. At its first session in 1994, the Intergovernmental Forum, a non-institutional organization, adopted priorities for action for the effective implementation of the programme areas set out in chapter 19 of Agenda 21. The recommendations contained in the priorities for action were addressed to Governments and also provided guidance to international bodies for the development of tools for use by Governments in meeting their national targets. At the second session, held at Ottawa in February 1997, the Intergovernmental Forum reviewed activities carried out since the first session and provided further recommendations to the General Assembly at its special session in 1997 for the review of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. Considerable progress was reported in achieving the targets included in chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

28. At its third session, held in Brazil in October 2000, the Intergovernmental Forum reviewed progress on the follow-up on the programme of action for the sound management of chemicals included in chapter 19 of Agenda 21, as well as on progress in meeting the targets set at the first and second sessions of the Forum. Substantive progress has been achieved in meeting these targets and, in particular, progress was noted in the evaluation of the potential risks for human health and the environment of chemicals; harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals; increasing the availability of information; implementation of voluntary measures and negotiations for a legally binding instrument for persistent organic chemicals; the issuing of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and other chemicals; safer substitutes for and decreased use of hazardous chemicals; and development of national profiles and action plans for chemicals management.

29. At its third session, the Intergovernmental Forum adopted the Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action beyond 2000, which are addressed to Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders. The Priorities emphasize the efficient coordination of efforts by all sectors, the participation of employers and workers, and the strengthening of the community's "right to know". The Priorities include an update of objectives in established areas, and also set targets in several new areas. These include: data on inherent hazards in geographical areas other than temperate climate regions; ensuring that relevant hazard data become available as soon as possible; ensuring that information on hazards related to export of hazardous chemicals is available; management of stocks of pesticides and other chemicals that are no longer in use; global measures against persistent organic pollutants; data on poisonings of users of toxic pesticides; national plans of action to address hazardous chemicals; taking action against illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products; and promoting assistance to enable all participating countries to work on all of the Forum's programme areas. All partners of the Intergovernmental Forum — Governments, international organizations, industry, labour unions and public interest groups — are called upon to actively participate in realizing the Priorities within a defined time frame.

3. International Programme on Chemical Safety

30. WHO, jointly with ILO and UNEP, through the International Programme on Chemical Safety,[10] has continued to prepare guidance documents on methodologies for assessing risks from exposure to chemicals. Progress has also been reported on work related to endocrine disrupting chemicals, assessing risks for children and integrated health and environmental risk assessment. Within the framework of the project on the Harmonization of Approaches to Risk Assessment, the International Programme on Chemical Safety continued its work related to risk assessment terminology (jointly with OECD), cancer risk assessment, reproductive and developmental toxicity, exposure assessment and uncertainty/variability analysis.

31. Within its programme of risk assessment of priority chemicals, the International Programme continues to publish the Environmental Health Criteria and Concise International Chemical Assessment

Documents. The Environmental Health Criteria, which provide assessments of the effects of chemicals on human health and the environment, are particularly designed for use by scientific experts responsible for risk evaluation and to enable relevant authorities to establish policies on the safe use of these chemicals. The Concise International Chemical Assessment Documents reflect high-quality national or regional evaluations and focus on hazard and dose-response from exposure to particular chemicals.

32. Within the project on international chemical safety cards, managed by ILO through the International Programme with financial assistance by the European Union and ILO, approximately 1,200 international chemical safety cards can be accessed, at no cost, on the Internet, in the Chinese, English, French, Finnish, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Swahili, Thai and Urdu languages. Work on translation into the Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Portuguese languages is ongoing or planned. Close to 50 national institutions are involved in this project.

33. New poison information centres have been established in 25 countries. WHO has published a number of guidelines on poison control, which provide Governments and health-care professionals advice on the establishment and strengthening of poison control centres. Also, the International Programme's INTOX CD-ROM database containing evaluated information for poison centre professionals and clinical toxicologists have been published. The series entitled "Poison Information Monographs", of which over 400 are available on CD-ROM, includes the majority of information on diagnosis and treatment of poisoning, in particular up-to-date information on inquiries on exposures and suspected poisoning. The INTOX programme, with the involvement of experts from over 60 countries, has also developed a globally harmonized system for data collection on human poisonings, toxic exposures and chemical incidents. The system is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and is currently being translated into Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

34. WHO, through the International Programme on Chemical Safety and its partner institutions, has organized training courses on environmental and health risk assessment and management of toxic chemicals in a number of developing countries. Also, capacity-building was provided to over 60 developing countries on the establishment or strengthening of poison centres, and additional training was provided in the use of the International Programme harmonized database management system. In addition, training courses in the use of the INTOX, the International Programme's INCHEM databases and workshops on chemical safety have been held in the Philippines, Venezuela, South Africa (2), Viet Nam, Argentina, Ecuador, Nepal, Uruguay, Singapore and Germany.

35. UNEP held over 70 regional training and capacity-building workshops during the period, and supports projects to promote chemical safety in about 60 countries. These deal directly with banned or severely restricted chemicals.

36. In accordance with the Priorities for Action beyond 2000 adopted at the third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, the Forum's Standing Committee was requested to provide initial input on the extent of the problem of acutely toxic pesticides and guidance for sound risk management and reduction. The International Programme on Chemical Safety is well suited to contribute to this activity as it has been involved for some time in the collection of data on pesticide poisonings worldwide. In this connection, the International Programme has prepared a related project plan with the objective of collecting harmonized human data on pesticide poisonings, with a view to establishing the global burden of disease and dysfunction attributable to this cause. The project includes the undertaking of focused studies, including one on toxic exposures, setting up surveillance mechanisms and databases on pesticides, training within the health sector and awareness-raising through public education and prevention campaigns. To date, one workshop on evaluation of first stage activities that have taken place in India, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand was held at Delhi, in January 2001. A regional project, for which assistance from donor countries will be sought, is being planned. The project was to be considered at the meeting of the Global Information Network on Chemicals to be held at Tokyo in April 2001.

4. Prior informed consent

37. As a result of continuous collaboration that began in 1989 between FAO and UNEP on the principle of prior informed consent,[11] the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam, Netherlands, adopted the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed

Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade on 10 September 1998.[12] The Convention has been signed by 72 States and one regional economic integration organization, and will enter into force 90 days after the submission of the fiftieth instrument of ratification. As of February 2001, 14 instruments of ratification had been deposited. Member States and regional economic integration organizations should ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Convention with a view to ensuring that the necessary procedures are set into place for the its prompt implementation.

38. In its resolution on interim arrangements, the Rotterdam Conference decided to bring the original voluntary PIC procedure in line with the provisions of the Convention to allow, inter alia, to continue to operate a voluntary procedure for the application of the procedure. This is called the interim PIC procedure. Under this new procedure, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee performs the functions of the Conference of the Parties. An Interim Chemical Review Committee has been established by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. UNEP and FAO have been designated as secretariat for the Convention, and also serve as secretariat for the interim PIC procedure.

39. In its capacity as a governing body for the interim PIC procedure, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee addresses issues such as: review of methods of collection of information; establishment of the Interim Chemical Review Committee, including its operational procedures; inclusion of new chemicals into the interim PIC procedure; and adoption of decision guidance documents. As the subsidiary body of the interim PIC procedure, the Interim Chemical Review Committee considers draft decision guidance documents for new chemicals to be included in the interim PIC procedure, makes recommendations to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the inclusion of new chemicals in the interim PIC procedure, and reviews the operational procedures for the Interim Chemical Review Committee. The secretariat ensures the operation of the interim PIC procedure by performing the functions entrusted to it by article 19 of the Convention.

40. The objective of the Convention is to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm and to contribute to their environmentally sound use, by facilitating information exchange about their characteristics, by providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export and by disseminating these decisions to parties. The Convention applies to banned or severely restricted chemicals or pesticides and also includes severely hazardous pesticide formulations that are not otherwise banned or severely restricted according to the Convention. The Convention at present covers 31 products,[13] including 17 pesticides, 5 severely hazardous pesticide formulations and 5 industrial chemicals that were originally included in the Convention in September 1998, and 4 additional chemicals that have been included since.

41. In connection with the disparity between the number of products currently covered under the Rotterdam Convention (31) and the number of products that are included in the Consolidated List (over 300, see para. 8). It is worthwhile to mention that it will take longer to add a limited number of new products under the Rotterdam Convention, with its legally binding mandate, its focus on banned or severely restricted products and strict criteria for the inclusion of new products, including the preparation of decision guidance documents. The List, on the other hand, is an instrument mandated by General Assembly resolution 37/137 and others, with the primary responsibility of disseminating information available within the United Nations system on products harmful to health and the environment on which regulatory actions have been taken by Governments to as wide an audience as possible, including member Governments, as well as concerned non-governmental organizations.

42. It is also important to note that summaries of notification of regulatory action received by the Convention secretariat, if not satisfying all elements of the criteria specified in annex I to the Convention, will not be published; only limited information will be circulated. Therefore, the United Nations Secretariat intends to request the Convention secretariat to provide summaries of notifications that have not yet complied with the requirements of annex I, since those notifications remain valid within the country of origin, and they may be included in the List for the potential benefit of other countries.

B. Other developments

43. The World Trade Organization (WTO) addresses the issue of the export of domestically prohibited goods. More specifically the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment has been examining this issue since 1995 when the mandate of the Working Group on Export of Domestically Prohibited Goods and other Hazardous Substances of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was incorporated in the work programme of the Committee. While the Committee has identified a number of international instruments relevant to the export of domestically prohibited goods, much progress remains to be achieved. There have been, however, positive exchanges of experiences between the Committee and the secretariats of relevant multilateral environmental agreements. For example, the recent trade-related developments in the Rotterdam Convention and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants[14] have been presented to the Committee on Trade and Environment[15] by the respective Convention secretariats. Further, a representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will brief the Committee, at its meeting in June 2001 on the information included in the Consolidated List, more particularly on the restrictive regulatory actions taken by national authorities on consumer products that may be hazardous because of their chemical composition.

C. Technical assistance/capacity-building

44. The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, as the overall mechanism for the promotion of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system in the area of technical assistance for strengthening capacity-building for developing countries, has continued to provide a central forum for the coordination of such activities. The Inter-Organization participating organizations of the ten organize related workshops on such issues as the prevention and disposal of obsolete and unwanted stocks of pesticides.

45. The Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety actively promotes assistance to enable all countries to work in all of the Forum's programme areas, and its Standing Committee provides advice and assistance with regional efforts and monitoring of progress. The updated Intergovernmental Forum's Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (see para. 29) address the need to provide appropriate hazard data on all chemicals in commerce, mechanisms for accessing information on chemicals and building the capacities of countries to access and use such information. An information exchange network on capacity-building for the sound management of chemicals within the framework of the Intergovernmental Forum is being established to enhance access to information on various aspects of capacity-building activities. Progress made on these Priorities and further recommendations for action will be considered at the next session of the Forum, in 2003. The Stockholm Convention secretariat in UNEP is continuing to implement its programme of action in the field of persistent organic pollutants and held during 1999 and 2000 29 regional and subregional workshops on persistent organic pollutants, issued and distributed 18 related publications and supported 25 related country-based projects. In the area of toxic substances, UNEP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) collaborate in the undertaking of projects for assessing national management needs regarding toxic substances and for regionally based assessment of persistent toxic substances. It is expected that as the designated principle entity of the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention, the Intergovernmental Forum will be able to support countries' activities under this treaty, which, inter alia, will include capacity-building. In addition, the Intergovernmental Forum has begun implementation of an information exchange network for capacity assistance and significant steps have been taken recently to improve capacity-building. It should be pointed out however, that there is a need to elevate the relative priority for capacity-building in the pesticides and toxic chemical areas within the governing bodies of respective United Nations organizations.

46. The International Programme on Chemical Safety has continued its programme of training courses on environmental and health risk assessment and management of toxic chemicals, and on capacity-building for the establishment and/or strengthening of poison centres. Also, the International Programme is planning to conduct training activities within the health sector, and has already carried out a related workshop at Delhi, in January 2001 (see para. 36).

47. With regard to domestically prohibited goods, WTO stresses the need for national health and environmental standards and their effective

enforcement as the most important form of protection for developing countries against imports of undesirable products. Capacity-building and technical assistance is, therefore, necessary in this context and should be directed at enhancing the ability of developing and least-developed countries to make use of existing information and training sources.

IV. Future trends and emerging issues

48. While the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals are relatively new mechanisms, they have been instrumental in helping identify priorities for action by Governments and international organizations, in improving awareness of international activities and access to information, and in increasing cooperation and coordination in the area of chemical safety. During the period under review, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was adopted and opened for signature at Stockholm on 22 and 23 May 2001. Some 91 countries and the European Union have signed the Convention. The prompt ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Convention with a view to its entry into force as soon as possible, and preferably by 2004, would be an important step towards achieving progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. In that connection, closer collaboration between UNEP and GEF in promoting the implementation of the Stockholm Convention is envisaged. It is encouraging that UNEP and the World Bank have signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate and coordinate their respective identification, implementation and review of certain country or regionally based activities for the reduction and/or elimination of the release of persistent organic pollutants, taking into account the priorities identified in the convention. The areas of cooperation include supporting the development and undertaking of national or regional implementation plans.

49. The system of designated national authorities, a mechanism of great importance for the implementation of the interim PIC procedure, has seen a regular increase in the number of countries making nominations. Since last reporting on this issue, in June 2000, Cambodia has nominated, for the first time, a designated national authority for participation in the interim PIC procedure, and two member States, Mexico and Samoa have nominated additional designated national authorities.

50. In September 1999, WHO notified the Director-General of WTO that certain cosmetic products containing mercury were being manufactured in European countries and marketed in the developing world. The WTO Committee on Trade and Environment, concerned with the domestically prohibited goods, considered the issue at its subsequent sessions in 1999 and 2000. The case highlights a situation particularly problematic for consumers to whom the products are sold and who do not have access to relevant information and are unaware of the hazards involved. The WTO secretariat has recognized, however, that some related information is already available in the Consolidated List, which identifies a number of products containing mercury and mercury compounds, along with pertinent regulatory actions. The United Nations Secretariat is ready to pursue further the issue of cosmetic products containing mercury in close cooperation with the WTO secretariat.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

51. During the period under consideration, there has been a marked progress in the activities carried out in the area of products harmful to health and the environment. The pertinent nature of the Consolidated List has been widely recognized by all stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the academic and media worlds and other members of civil society, including consumer groups.

52. Dividing the List into two issuances, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, has made the Consolidated List more accessible to a greater number of users, and has made the various databases more manageable. This important progress, however, makes it necessary, at the same time, to review the directive related to the publication of the List in alternating languages each year, with no more than three languages per year and with the same frequency for each language. In accordance with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 37/137, the List would continue to include data collected on hazardous products under the original PIC procedure until the products are reviewed by the Rotterdam Convention (see para. 41 above).

53. At the same time, the agreements entered into by the parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade would make it necessary to review the services rendered by the Consolidated List with a view to delineating the future publication of the List.

Recommendation 1

54. **The Economic and Social Council may wish to consider publishing each of the two issuances of the Consolidated List, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, in all official languages — the English language version in the already established formatted text, and the versions in the other languages as a text file. In this connection, the List should continue to include previously collected data, while at the same time making distinct entries for those products covered under the interim PIC procedure, in line with the Rotterdam Convention. The List would consequently keep updating the information contained therein in accordance with relevant action being taken by the Rotterdam Convention.**

55. The organizations concerned with the question of products harmful to health and the environment recognize that national environmental and health standards and their effective enforcement are the most important tools of protection for developing countries against undesirable products. They also recognize and stress the need for strengthening capacity-building and technical assistance to enhance the position and ability of concerned countries in using the existing information sources. GEF, as the designated principle entity of the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention, will be able to support countries' activities under the Convention, which will include capacity-building. In addition, an information exchange network on capacity-building for the sound management of chemical within the framework of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, currently being established, will enhance access of those concerned with information on aspects of capacity-building activities.

Recommendation 2

56. **The Council may wish to recommend to multilateral and bilateral agencies to continue to strengthen and coordinate their activities for improving capacity-building of developing and least developed countries, including innovative methodologies for earmarking, assessing and monitoring technical assistance in the area of sound management of toxic chemicals and dangerous pharmaceuticals.**

57. With regard to related work of other intergovernmental bodies, it is particularly satisfying to stress the adoption of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Recommendation 3

58. **The Council may wish to recommend to Member States the prompt ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.**

59. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will hold consultations with concerned agencies and, taking into account recent developments, examine how best the scope and contents of the List could be refined and enhanced so as to avoid duplication of other instruments and provide better and more up-to-date information with wider coverage of products. In this context, the user survey to be undertaken by the Department should provide meaningful insights and comments, which would greatly assist the Department in improving the contents of future publications of the Consolidated List. The survey to be sent to all interested parties should be a useful tool for gathering information on the needs of those concerned with the List, improving its contents, increasing its coverage, and widening the scope and use of the List.

Recommendation 4

60. **The Council may wish to recommend that Member States, intergovernmental organizations, concerned non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society, including consumer groups, the academic sector and the media, pay close attention to and cooperate with the United Nations Secretariat in carrying out the forthcoming survey.**

Notes

[1] For previous issues of the Consolidated List, see United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.85.IV.8, E.87.IV.1, E.91.IV.4, E.94.IV.3 and E.97.IV.2.

[2] Representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, WHO, ILO, UNEP Chemicals and WTO participate in the inter-agency coordinating meetings.

[3] See A/41/329-E/1986/83, A/44/276-E/1989/78, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/50/182-E/1995/66 and Corr.1 and A/53/156-E/1998/78.

[4] Since 1987, the criteria has been included in all issues of the Consolidated List, as Consolidated Annex II.

[5] See www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/standard.htm#cr_specrisk.

[6] See www.codexalimentarius.net.

[7] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[8] For further information: www.who.int/iomc.

[9] See www.who.int/ifcs.

[10] See www.who.int/pcs.

[11] See www.pic.int.

[12] For developments between 1989 and 1998, see A/53/156-F/1998/78, paras. 26-28.

[13] They are 17 pesticides (2,4,5-T, Aldrin, Captafol, Chlordane, Chlordimeform, Chlorobenzilate, DDT, Dieldrin, Dinoseb and Dinoseb Salts, EDB (1,2-dibromoethane), Fluoroacetamide, HCH (mixed isomers), Heptachlor, Hexachlorobenzene, Lindane (gamma-HCH), Mercury Compounds and Pentachlorophenol), 5 severely hazardous pesticide formulations (Methamidophos, Methyl-parathion Monocrotophos, Parathion, and Phosphamidon), and 5 industrial chemicals (Crocidolite, PBBs, PCBs, PCTs and Tris (2,3-dibromopropyl) phosphate), which were originally included in the Convention in September 1998. The four additional chemicals included since then are binapacryl, ethylene dichloride, ethylene oxide and toxaphene.

[14] See www.chem.unep.ch/pops.

[15] See WT/CTE/W/128.

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Draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General is pleased to transmit herewith the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, including the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade.

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Draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade

Introduction

1. The fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution (resolution 54/122 of 20 January 2000) envisaging the proclamation of a United Nations literacy decade. This proposal was first brought forward at CONFINTEA V (Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, Hamburg, 1997), endorsed at a round table held at the World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000, and reiterated by the United Nations General Assembly special session, Geneva, 2000.

2. In Dakar at the World Education Forum, the international community committed itself, by 2015, to ensuring that all children "have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality" and to "achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy". In more general terms, but with equal urgency, these goals were part of the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and were reaffirmed by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly marking the Social Summit +5. To achieve this, 113 million children must enter a quality school environment, and almost 500 million youth and adults must learn to use literacy skills in their daily lives by that time.

3. There are about 880 million illiterate youth and adults and some 113 million children who are still out of school and who continue to nurture every year the world's illiteracy statistics. They are the poorest of the poor and most of them – two thirds of the adult illiterates and 60% of the out-of-school children – are female. Among the world's less-developed regions, the adult literacy rate is the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, with respective median rates of 57% and 58%; but around 600 million of the illiterate youth and adults are to be found in the nine large countries representing more than half of the world's population. The fact that the map of illiteracy continues to overlap with the map of social, gender and ethnic inequalities, makes the struggle for literacy a struggle not only for education goals but for social justice and for human dignity an empowerment. In September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Declaration consequently gave special emphasis to women and girls' education. Also, United Nations resolution 55/586 of December 2000 on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty emphasized "the critical role of both formal and non-formal education and training and basic education in the empowerment of those living in poverty". Literacy opens the door to sustainable learning and livelihood, as well as educational opportunity.

4. Over the 1990s, and under the umbrella of EFA, important efforts were made particularly regarding children and primary education; however, prospects for universal literacy are not encouraging. As stated by the EFA 2000 Assessment, since 1990:

- primary school enrolments increased by some 82 million children;
- developing countries as a whole achieved an average net enrolment ratio in excess of 80%;
- there was a modest improvement in gender equality in primary enrolment in many regions, with 44 million more girls in school in 1998 than in 1990;
- repetition and dropout rates declined;
- early childhood care and education expanded modestly, and mainly in urban areas; of the more than 800 million children under 6 years of age, fewer than a third benefit today from any form of early childhood education;

- the overall adult literacy rate rose to 85% for men and to 74% for women, but this is far from the goal of reducing adult illiteracy rates to half of its 1990 level;

- growth in non-formal education and skills training was slow.

5. According to the latest UNESCO estimates, and if current trends continue, by the year 2010 the adult illiterate population would represent 830 million people and the proportion may decrease only from 20% to 17% (namely one in every six adults would still be illiterate). On the other hand, meeting the basic literacy needs of children, young people and adults has become an increasingly complex endeavour, in the context of increased education levels required by modern societies as well as the more complex nature of literacy in order to deal with its more sophisticated applications, including the emergence of new information and communication technologies.

6. This is an unacceptable situation in a world where the access to and processing of information and knowledge is the basis of opportunity and growth. The decade opens a critical window for change – a chance to give further impetus to the commitments of Dakar. This chance must not be missed. The decade must take up the challenge to put in place measures and resources which will lead both to the meeting of the international target in terms of percentage, and to a reduction in absolute numbers. Annex I illustrates graphically the clear shortfall in meeting the 2015 target if there is no change in current trends.

7. Over the last few decades, the year 2000 emerged as a horizon against which mankind projected some of its most important aspirations, universal literacy one of them. However, at the turn of the century literacy for all – children, youth and adults – is still an unaccomplished goal and an ever moving target. A combination of ambitious goals, insufficient and parallel efforts, inadequate resources and strategies, and continued under-estimation of the magnitude and complexity of the task, is likely to explain this situation. Lessons learnt over these past decades show, in any case, that meeting the goal of universal literacy calls not only for more and better efforts but for renewed political will and for doing things differently at all levels: locally, nationally and internationally. There is an urgent need for **a renewed commitment to literacy for all** through a major new worldwide initiative that focuses on literacy as an integral component of the global and renewed commitment for Education for All (EFA) and for social development.

8. Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires **a renewed vision of literacy**, which will foster cultural identity, democratic participation and citizenship, tolerance and respect for others, social development, peace and progress. It must admit that literacy is not confined to any particular age (childhood or adulthood), institution (i.e. the school system) or sector (i.e. education); that it is related to various dimensions of personal and social life and development; and that it is a life-learning process. Such renewed vision towards literacy for all calls for renewed modalities of operations, monitoring and accountability procedures and mechanisms.

- **Why** a United Nations literacy decade?

Because universal literacy – for children, young people and adults – remains a major quantitative and qualitative challenge for both developing and industrialized countries.

Because literacy is a fundamental human right, a basic learning need, and the key to learning to learn.

Because knowledge and experience have shown that the battle for literacy requires intensive, focused and sustained efforts beyond one-shot programmes, projects or campaigns.

Because the United Nations and its specialized agencies offer the only universal forum to develop strategies of access to the right to education which is the fundamental human right and specifically for education for all as understood by the World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990, and confirmed by the World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000.

Aims

9. This United Nations initiative aims at **voice for all, learning for all** through a decade **for literacy for all.** The decade is designed to give greater thrust to achieving international development targets, and to give priority to make opportunities available where currently they are not: for the poorest and most marginalized people.

(a) **Voice for all** – In a globalizing world, the voice of the poor and marginalized is often lost, becoming socially invisible and politically silent. Literacy for all is a key to enabling expression of identity and participation in debate in today's knowledge-based society. Literacy is the crucial first step in basic education which is "an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century" (Dakar Framework, para. 6). Tomorrow's generation of active citizens depends on quality literacy learning for today's children. Literacy as written communication empowers people to express and share their own dynamic ways of knowing, their own social realities. Through literacy in their own and other languages, people build a culturally specific knowledge base as a deliberate process, and give new value to local knowledge, enabling it to circulate more widely and to serve as a basis for creative confrontation with other people's knowledge. Literacy enables people to be active participants in democratic processes, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

(b) **Learning for all** – Literacy is the first step towards sustainable learning, towards an education "geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies" (Dakar Framework, para. 3). Literacy enables access to bodies of knowledge from other horizons and empowers learners, both adults and children, to make a critical assessment of its usefulness and value. Literacy helps construct and reinforce lifelong learning for all.

(c) **Literacy for all: a renewed vision** – To reach voice for all, learning for all, literacy for all, will:

- require a renewed commitment from all: national governments, national societies, local communities and international agencies;
- transcend age groups; it is the foundation of lifelong learning, a key to inter- and cross-generational learning;
- include *all*: children, young people and adults, girls and boys, women and men, rural and urban, countries in the South and in the North;
- ensure effective and sustainable literacy levels: this implies ensuring adequate conditions and opportunities for literacy development in the family, the community, the workplace, the school system, the media;
- necessitate active policies and collective efforts not only towards literacy acquisition, but towards plural and meaningful uses of literacy as a means of expression, communication and lifelong learning.

(d) **A decade for ALL** – Efforts thus far have failed to offer literacy opportunities to certain groups of people: women and female youth, the urban and rural poor, minorities and indigenous peoples, those in inaccessible regions and post-conflict areas, prisoners and many others. Literacy is a key part of the struggle to alleviate poverty by increasing the control of the poor over their own lives. For education for all efforts to be truly **inclusive of ALL**, the decade focuses on these groups in particular.

10. Towards the vision of literacy for all, with particular focus on those groups of people for whom current strategies have failed, the decade will:

(a) strengthen the **political will**, both of national governments and the international community, to commit resources of all kinds to improving literacy rates; this will be based on a heightened awareness of the literacy need and an increased recognition of its central importance; it will also work for the effectiveness of primary education in ensuring sustainable literacy practices;

(b) develop more **inclusive policy-making environments** in which active and wide-ranging participation in literacy promotion can take place, in particular to develop partnerships, resources and innovative approaches for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups, and for seeking alternative school and non-school approaches to learning;

(c) devise and design **new strategies**, especially at national level, so that local actors are empowered to offer relevant, high-quality opportunities to gain literacy skills, linked to poverty alleviation.

Guiding principles

11. The following guiding principles serve to channel the efforts of the decade, giving focus to the energies of the various actors.

(a) **Rights-based**: the right to learn and to an education is the starting point. Literacy is a fundamental part of that right. Every individual has the right to write and read for their own purposes. It is therefore not an option, but an obligation on governments, civil society and the international community to actualize that right.

(b) **Access-driven**: tireless efforts must be made to ensure that no-one is out of reach of opportunities to acquire literacy skills; barriers of all kinds – social, geographical, gender-related, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, economic – must be overcome.

(c) **Poverty-focused**: literacy efforts must be part of an integrated approach to poverty eradication, aiming at halving the number of those living on $1/day or less by 2015. This will require the pro-active development of links to other sectors, such as health, food production, micro-enterprise and skills training.

(d) **Partnership-directed**: working together is the only way to ensure maximum impact and the most effective use of resources. Partnerships must be developed, particularly at national level, between government, civil society, the private sector and local communities on the basis of regular and open dialogue.

(e) **Quality-minded**: only an education of quality will make any difference in the long run; sustained use of literacy will be based on high quality input (teaching, animation), relevant content and the promotion of a local literate environment.

(f) **Learner-centred**: the context and profile of learners, both adults and children, must shape the process and purpose of literacy acquisition; the nature of local literacies must be discovered and respected; the oral use of languages will determine multilingual approaches, and participatory learning processes will build on existing knowledge.

(g) **Community-wide**: learning opportunities must be structured with regard to the whole community – children and adults, women and men, old and young. The lines of demarcation between formal and non-formal modes must be revisited and new approaches found to promote a community-wide learning environment.

(h) **"Literate environment"**: efforts towards universal literacy require not only increased enrolment in school or in youth and adult education programmes. Adequate and stimulating literate environments – at home, in the classroom, in the workplace, in the community, in libraries, in play and sports grounds, etc. – are essential to literacy acquisition, development and use.

(i) **Impact-oriented**: all actions will be judged on their impact at the grassroots; sustained local ownership of literacy efforts, with appropriate support, will raise awareness of opportunities and threats in achieving maximum impact and lead to lesson-learning and evaluation.

Key implementation strategies

12. Achieving literacy for all means addressing multiple and very differentiated target groups and contexts, making use of various learning institutions and systems available, and devising differentiated strategies, contents and mechanisms, appropriate and relevant to each of them at local, national, regional and global levels.

(a) **Demand and country-driven interventions** – The ownership of the decade should remain country-driven – bottom-up rather than top-down. Within a unified global framework, national literacy for all plans and activities will be defined by countries as part of their national education for all plans according to their specific conditions, needs and possibilities. Each country and each community should be free to define which sectors of the population to include and prioritize under the ten-year literacy plan, and which strategy to adopt in order to make literacy for all a reality.

(b) **Build on what exists** – All countries are engaged in school and out-of-school literacy provision and development, and many have innovative policies and experiences to consolidate. Thus, rather than creating new or ad hoc structures or programmes, efforts must build on what exists, strengthening, expanding or redirecting it, as needed. A key to success lies precisely in merging literacy decade activities with the regular life of families, schools, local and national communities, and within the agendas of international organizations.

(c) **Cutting across sectors, institutions and agents** – Literacy is related to various dimensions of personal and social life and development. Thus literacy efforts must be related not only to education but also to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies. Furthermore, literacy acquisition, development and use can no longer be viewed as the responsibility of a single institution, sector or educational modality. Neither the school system nor non-formal education programmes can accomplish this task in isolation. It requires complementarity and synergy of action among governments, NGOs, universities, public and private organizations and civil society at large. Advancing firmly towards literacy for all requires large-scale efforts supported by wide and sustained social mobilization at the local, national and global levels, going beyond education as a sector and include broad social, cultural and economic institutions and policies.

(d) **Comprehensive, flexible and compensatory** – National literacy for all plans and strategies must be flexible so as to incorporate the inputs from civil society and from lessons learnt along its implementation process, as well as the new circumstances and developments that emerge during the decade. Also, in order to avoid further discrimination of the most disadvantaged areas and groups, special measures must be taken and resources allocated to compensate regional and social imbalances between areas and local communities.

(e) **Area- and community-based** – Actions at the local level must be rooted in the respective community so that:

- decisions are taken in a genuinely participatory process where all relevant community agents and institutions are involved;
- the plan and subsequent actions respond to the specific characteristics, needs and assets of each community and area;
- convergence, partnership and complementarity among the various community institutions and agents is facilitated and materialized;
- monitoring and accountability mechanisms are clearly defined at the local level, within a framework of autonomy and responsibility.

Coordination mechanisms

13. The Dakar Framework for Action makes it clear that progress towards EFA goals will be country-driven and based on productive and mutually supportive partnerships. It emphasizes that the principal actors are at the national level: governments and their institutions, civil society and NGOs, communities and their organizations, the private sector. Other partners, such as aid agencies and the United Nations system must act to support and optimize educational efforts at the national level. The decade marshals energies of the international community to that end.

14. At national level the key partners will be:

(a) National governments: governments must ensure that literacy is placed at the centre of basic education policies and efforts for all ages, through approaches including as well as bridging between formal or non-formal systems. They must also ensure that such policies address primarily the most neglected and disadvantaged groups, for reasons of income, age, gender, ethnicity or any other condition.

(b) Civil society: literacy for all requires wide social participation and responsibility. Non-governmental and community-based organizations working with adults and children at the grassroots, families, schools, educational, cultural and religious institutions, libraries, academic and research centres, the mass media, private enterprises, social organizations and sports clubs, all have a place and a role to play in this endeavour.

Through national EFA platforms bringing all the relevant actors together in sustained dialogue and policy formulation. The establishment of these platforms, where they do not yet exist, was envisaged at Dakar and will be a high priority at the start of the decade.

At national level, all the partners will work together in the planning, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts, as part of the larger EFA dialogue platform. State and civil society must renew their interest in literacy promotion and become critical partners in this endeavour.

15. At the international level, UNESCO will lead the coordination of the decade in accordance with the United Nations resolution proposing the decade and within the coordination framework of the EFA processes. This coordination will build on partnerships among:

(a) UNESCO and its institutes, such as UIE (UNESCO Institute for Education) (lifelong learning), UIS (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) (monitoring), IBE (International Bureau for Education) (curriculum content), IIEP (UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning) (training), UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and other agencies of the United Nations system and the World Bank; regional organizations, networks and mechanisms, and regional development banks: Organizations at regional and international level will focus on joint and cooperative action to build capacity at national level to achieve the expected outcomes of the decade.

(b) at the regional and international levels, cooperation will be developed through dialogue within EFA structures (such as the EFA working group) and through the ongoing interaction between professionals in the different agencies. Each agency should appoint a "focal point person" to ensure consistent coordination of literacy support efforts.

Expected outcomes

16. The coordinated efforts of the international community should ensure that the decade results in the following seven outcomes:

(a) **Baseline knowledge**: a clearer understanding of the structure of illiteracies, building on the EFA 2000 Assessment and addressing issues hitherto not adequately addressed, for example: the constraints on female literacy acquisition in specific contexts; the percentage of the world's illiterate population made up of minority language groups; the percentage of adult illiteracy made up of partially schooled youth; approaches to secure the formal/non-formal interfaces and more generally to redress the imbalance in resource allocations between the two sectors.

(b) **Policy development**: a viable policy-making framework, with regional and international support to national-level initiatives to develop and elaborate those policies – based on dialogue in national EFA platforms and resulting in national literacy for all plans as part of national EFA plans.

(c) **Mobilization**: a clear prioritization at national level of the particular population groups where special literacy efforts are required, resulting in targeted action. This will involve government, civil society and others acting together; at a local level it will mean stronger school-community links and community-wide learning.

(d) **Strategy development**: increased capacity in designing context-sensitive strategies, taking account of diversity at subnational levels. Strategy decisions will focus above all on locally identified needs and be based on broad consultation.

(e) **Quality improvement**: quality will be crucial to sustaining literacy processes in communities. It is not enough to multiply literacy opportunities without also addressing the quality of input to learners and of the materials available in the local environment. Thus improved and increased training for schoolteachers and adult educators will be essential, particularly with regard to innovative pedagogical approaches, such as multilingual approaches which incorporate the mother tongue, interactive learning methodologies, the use and promotion of local knowledge and culture in materials and in the teaching/learning process, the development of school-community links with a view to strengthening life-wide learning processes.

(f) **Impact on poverty reduction**: conditions for sustaining literate environments to promote the functional use of literacy skills. In culturally and linguistically sensitive ways, literacy practices and materials will connect with life skills which enable individuals and communities to break the cycle of poverty and pursue broad social development goals.

(g) **Use of information technologies**: appropriate and effective use of new information technologies in two ways:

(i) at international, regional and national levels virtual fora and discussion groups should be set up to exchange good practice and share information on strategies, problems and progress;

(ii) at the level of learners, it is urgent to develop and apply new delivery mechanisms to reach marginalized and poor groups and communities. IT

must be seen as a learning tool which supports rather than threatens the social and cultural environment and advances not only literacy but also empowerment.

Recommended actions

17. The following set of actions is designed to lead to the outcomes listed above. They are time bound (see possible time frame below) and phased over the whole decade:

(a) **Capacity-building for baseline knowledge**: national research capacity will be strengthened through regional and national workshops, focusing on local priorities and majoring on methodology and analysis. Data and the resulting analysis will serve to identify target groups, resource availability and needs, and will serve as a planning tool.

(b) **Organization of policy fora**: to build common understanding, joint ownership and collective commitment to implement the policies and plans agreed upon using the national and regional EFA forums and meetings, national literacy for all policies and plans will be developed, in the context of overall education for all planning. These fora will involve government departments, civil society, the private sector and local representatives of international agencies.

(c) **Springboard professional consultations**: to mobilize all the actors and energies available. These consultations, at national and subnational levels, will take place early in the decade. Discussions will focus on the vision for the use of relevant literacies in a literate environment, and on what each partner can bring to the process of making the vision a reality in particular contexts. This will involve a clear demonstration of feasible methods and a realistic inventory of available resources.

(d) **Strategic implementation and cooperation**: progress in literacy for all will only be made if specific strategic plans are in place to reach the hard-to-reach. Using the baseline research and based on the policies and national plans, implementation will require intensive dialogue with other literacy stakeholders, such as those working with cultural aspects of learning and development, language issues in literacy, role of learning in participatory development, media (radio, television, press, Internet).

(e) **Capacity-building for quality**: regional workshops to design quality training programmes will equip and stimulate national literacy trainers in approaches which enable communities and institutions (traditional and recent/officiaily recognized) to promote a sustainable literate environment, based on the affirmation of local knowledge and on self-confident cultural expression.

(f) **Information and exchange**: there are huge differences between the effectiveness of literacy efforts and the development of literate environments in different regions and countries. Knowledge-sharing, networking, South-South and South-North links will give the opportunity for educators and trainers to visualize radically different ways of promoting literacy. UNESCO will seek funds to set up strategic exchanges, and use the virtual forum (see (g) below) and other pilot projects to enable greater information-sharing on good practice.

(g) **Use of IT**:

(i) UNESCO will create a database and linked virtual forum on literacy needs (linked to UIS databases), literacy practices and problems. It will enable interactive discussion around literacy themes;

(ii) UNESCO will examine the possibility of launching a multi-year research and experimentation programme, together with other partners to develop an understanding and clear strategies on the use of IT as a learning tool for literacy learners and neo-literates, in the context of local creativity and self-expression, not merely as a means of access to exogenous material on the Internet.

(h) **Celebration**: A distinctive feature of the decade will be regular thematic celebration, focused each year on International Literacy Day. It will be a means to express and generate enthusiasm for learning and literacy amongst learners, facilitators and all those involved. Thus, celebration at national and community level is the most important since it is there that progress can be most clearly seen. Celebration will not mask the enormous needs nor cover up the need for regular critical analysis of the process and progress of literacy. Rather, it will give an opportunity at every level to mark significant progress in the local context and generate further energy for the next year.

UNESCO will have a special role in raising the profile of a particular aspect of the literacy effort each year, as a theme to celebrate, such as gender equity, diversity, facilitators and teachers, creative writing, and others (see Annex II). Among other initiatives, this will mean the promotion of wide media coverage of local situations, supported by press packs and thematic background materials. This international activity will aim to give prominence and encouragement to national accomplishments. Regions and countries will be encouraged to pick up the theme in their own way and for local purposes.

Possible time frame

18. It is proposed that the decade should start in 2002. Each International Literacy Day will be a milestone and will provide the opportunity to assess, critique and celebrate progress during the decade. The final event will take place on 8 September 2012 at the end of the tenth year.

19. The Plan of Action proposes concrete and specific timed events and activities to take place throughout the decade. The chart in Annex II presents a possible sequencing over the ten years.

Monitoring and evaluation

20. Monitoring and evaluation will serve to assess, both during the decade and at its end, the progress the world makes towards the United Nations goals of eradicating illiteracy, and as part of that examine indicators relating to reaching gender equity, guaranteeing the right to education, ensuring sustainable development, and improving the quality of the lives of the poor and marginalized. To achieve this, monitoring and evaluation processes will, through periodic assessment, focus on three related aspects of literacy:

(a) the change in the absolute numbers and in the percentages of the literate population;

(b) the relative contribution of formal and non-formal education to attaining literacy;

(c) the impact of literacy on the quality of people's lives.

These indicators will require different methods and the involvement of different partners.

21. UIS within its EFA observatory will play a special role in establishing valid quantitative indicators, particularly to link literacy outputs and achievements with other sectors, e.g. progress on health indicators, income generation, political participation, cultural self-expression. Literacy data will become increasingly available as part of the EFA monitoring process and such data will be tagged and tracked over the decade.

22. Improving impact indicators will require qualitative and ethnographic approaches. To achieve this, UNESCO/UIS should build a cooperative programme with a range of other agencies and partners, such as civil society and NGOs, universities and research institutes. These partnerships will focus on developing a consensus on what indicators to establish and how data will be collected over the decade to arrive at a longitudinal assessment of the value of literacy. Thus literacy experience will be documented in depth, through a wide range of diverse case studies, country-wide analyses and regional comparisons.

23. The organization, process and cooperation of the decade itself will be evaluated, at the mid-point and at the end. In addition, a subgroup of the EFA working group will examine progress annually and propose course corrections along the way as necessary.

24. At the end of the decade substantial progress should have been made towards the 2015 goal of achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy – on a straight-line projection we should be three quarters of the way there, both in terms of school-age children and newly literate youth and adults. Gender equity in primary schooling should have been attained in 2005 according to the Dakar Framework for Action. Above all, the decade should have had an impact on the quality of lives of the poor and marginalized, enabling large numbers to break out of the cycle of poverty and deprivation. How then might we follow up on the decade?

Follow-up to the decade

25. Much depends on how far these ambitious goals have been met. Even allowing for their achievement, there will still be enormous efforts to be made. How will the decade have equipped us better to go on with the challenge? Literacy efforts should, by 2012, be enhanced by:

(a) a clearer and more detailed analysis of the challenge;

(b) greater collective commitment, political will and results;

(c) stronger and more specific national policies and plans (and planning capacity);

(d) a heavier emphasis on the quality of educational programmes (teachers, materials, etc.);

(e) a comprehensive programme to foster non-formal education as one pillar of literacy efforts;

(f) the integration of IT into learning strategies and as delivery mechanisms on an increasingly broad basis.

26. In view of the remaining challenge, the spirit and the momentum of the decade must continue. The achievements must be sustained and the new commitments written into regular

programmes and budgets. The increased capacity and political will should continue to inspire and enable further efforts. The EFA platforms at national level, the working group at international level, and UNESCO's own sectoral programmes focused on EFA goals will provide a continuing framework, strengthened by the outcomes of the decade.

27. The decade will only have been effective if there is sustained and sustainable literacy acquisition and use in thousands of local communities around the world. Thus its continued impact will be seen in empowered communities using and celebrating their own literacies and passing them on to the next generation.

28. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 159 EX/Decision 7.1.3,

2. Having examined document 161 EX/7,

3. Further recalling the commitments made at the World Education Forum, Dakar, April 2000,

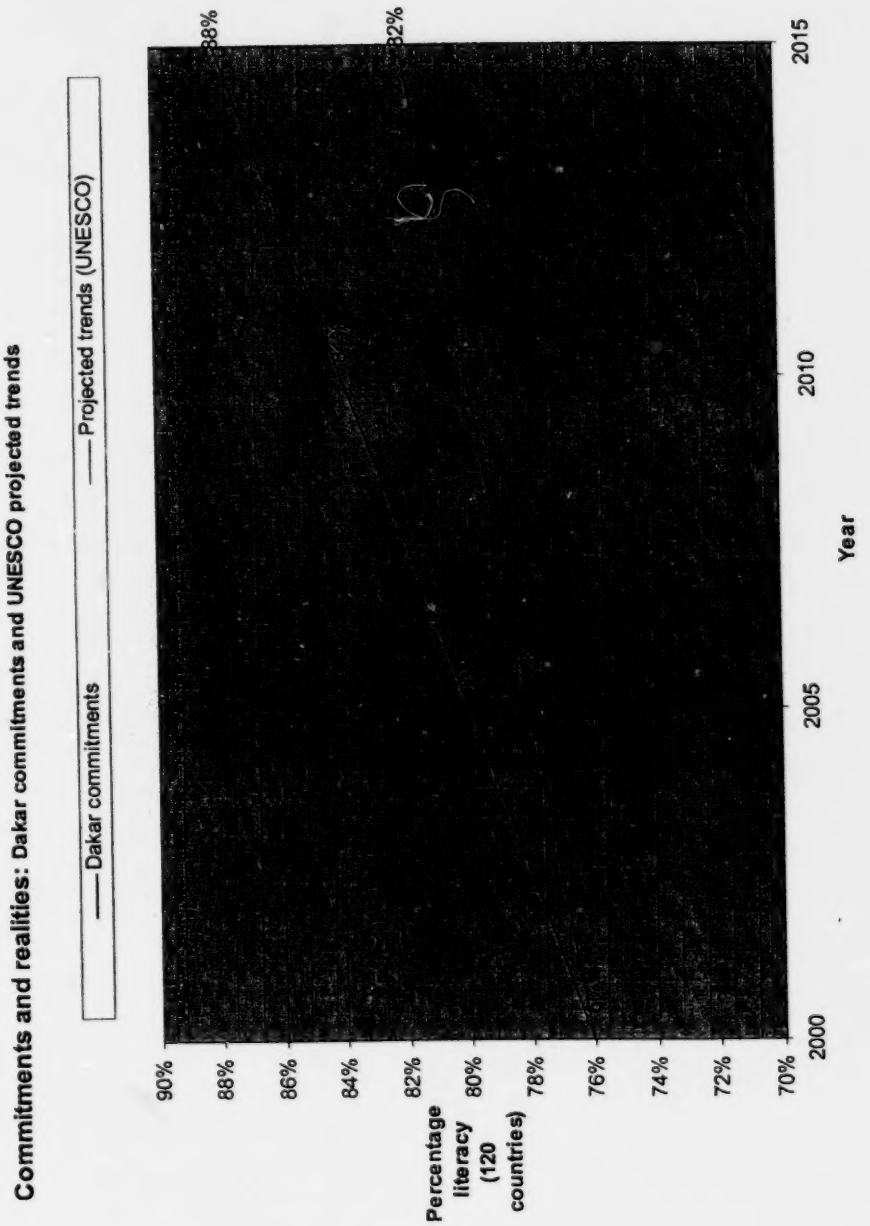
4. Acknowledging the centrality of literacy to basic education, including formal and non-formal education, lifelong learning and social development;

5. Recognizes the urgent need for refocusing in a global and concerted manner on literacy as an integral component of Education for All;

6. Appeals to Member States to give particular attention and support to the item on a United Nations literacy decade which will be placed on the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly;

7. Authorizes the Director-General to submit the proposed draft plan of action for a United Nations literacy decade, taking into account the comments and observations of the Executive Board at its 161st session, to the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

ANNEX I


Commitments and realities: Dakar commitments and UNESCO projected trends
Dakar commitments
Projected trends (UNESCO)
88%
82%
90%
88%
86%
84%
82%
80%
78%
76%
74%
72%
70%
Percentage literacy (120 countries)
2000
2005
2010
2015
Year

ANNEX II

A proposed timed plan of decade activities and events

Begin Sept 2002-	2002-2003 YEAR 1	2003-2004 YEAR 2	2004-2005 YEAR 3	2005-2006 YEAR 4	2006-2007 YEAR 5	2007-2008 YEAR 6	2008-2009 YEAR 7	2009-2010 YEAR 8	2010-2011 YEAR 9
Development Goals				Gender Equality Education Goals	Proposal: International Gender Equality in Eduation Conference				
1. Baseline Research	Research Workshops								
2. Policy Forums	National Forums	National Forums Regional Forums	National Forums	National Forums Regional Forum	National Forums	National Forums Regional Forum	National Forums	National Forums Regional Forum	National Forums
3. Mobilization: National and Sub-national Springboard Consultations	Consultations	Consultations	Consultations		Consultations		Consultations		Consultations
4. Strategic Implementation and Cooperation	Sustained cooperation and dialogue								
5. Regional Training Programme Design Workshops		Workshops		Workshops			Workshops		
6. Information and Exchange	Sustained Strategic Exchanges								
7. Information Technology Use a)	Database Creation	Sustained Virtual Forum							
b)	Five year reseach and experimentation programme								
International Literacy Day Activities	8 September 2003: Gender Equity	8 September 2004: Diversity	8 September 2005: Creative Literacy	8 September 2006: Teachers and Facilitators	8 September 2007: Half-way celebration	8 September 2008: Quality	8 September 2009: Participation	8 September 2010: Literacy for Health	8 September 2011: Materials and Literature

A/56/114
E/2001/93

United Nations E/2001/94

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Item 13 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development

Ensuring a smooth transition of countries graduating from least developed country status

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2000/34 of 28 July 2000, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General "to report on the progress achieved in the implementation of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 46/206, and to make recommendations on additional measures that can be taken to ensure a smooth transition from least developed country status for graduating countries". The present report responds to that request to the extent possible at the present time.

II. Graduation and transition from the list of the least developed countries

2. The Committee for Development Policy has been mandated to identify those developing countries that should be considered "the least developed". This involves identifying both possible new additions to the list of the least developed countries and candidates for removal from the list — that is, countries that have successfully "graduated" to a higher level of development. The present criteria for being added to or removed from the list are set out in the Committee's report on its second session.[1]

3. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 46/206 of 20 December 1991, the General Assembly "stresses that there is need for a smooth transition of the countries graduating out of the group of least developed countries, with a view to avoiding disruption to their development plans, programmes and projects, and invites Governments, international organizations and other concerned parties to take appropriate steps to ensure such a smooth transition". The resolution also states, in its paragraph 5, "that the graduation of a country will be completed following a

* E/2001/100.

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transition period of three years, which will commence immediately after the General Assembly has taken note of the finding of the Committee for Development Planning [later renamed the Committee for Development Policy] to graduate that country".

III. The period of transition from least developed country status

4. At its third session, the Committee for Development Policy noted that the transition period specified in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 46/206 might be interpreted differently from the smooth transition referred to in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 2000/34. The Committee is of the view that the General Assembly refers to a "pre-graduation" transition period, whereas the Council refers to the consequences of graduation and thus to a "post-graduation" transition. The Committee also expressed the view that the "pre-graduation" transition period begins immediately after the General Assembly takes note of the Committee's initial recommendation to graduate a country. It is thus the three-year period between the initial recommendation and the General Assembly's decision to graduate a country, on the basis of a reconfirmation arising from the second consecutive triennial review by the Committee. The "post-graduation" transition, on the other hand, would cover an unspecified period after the second consecutive recommendation of the Committee to graduate a country is endorsed by the General Assembly.

5. These two interpretations of the transition period have different policy implications. A smooth pre-graduation transition would involve measures to prepare a least developed country for the possible loss of benefits that it might suffer were it confirmed for graduation at the end of the three-year transition period. In the case of post-graduation transition, a smooth transition would relate to the removal of benefits after graduation and, in particular, to whether the removal should be gradual or immediate.

IV. Benefits associated with least developed country status

6. The major benefits associated with least developed country status are believed to fall into three main areas: multilateral trade; finance for development; and technical cooperation.

7. Compared to other developing countries, the least developed countries have always benefited from specific advantages under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Under GSP, a developed country can grant non-reciprocal duty concessions to imports from developing countries. Each importing country determines its own system, including product coverage and the volume of imports affected. Some developed countries, such as New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland, extend GSP benefits to all products originating from the least developed countries. Further benefits will be obtained in the context of the European Union's recently announced "Everything but Arms" initiative, which is aimed at rescinding quotas and duties on all products except military weapons from all of the least developed countries, although full liberalization of sugar, rice and bananas will not become effective until 2006-2009, depending on the commodity. It has been argued, however, that preferential schemes, such as GSP, have had only limited

success in generating significant export growth or improving the trade shares of beneficiaries.[2]

8. Benefits in the area of finance for development tend to involve voluntary commitments made by developed countries. In the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, all donors that had previously pledged to reach the target of 0.15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries restated their commitment. In addition, donor countries that had already reached the 0.15-per-cent target were invited to intensify their efforts to reach 0.20 per cent by 2000. In the final declaration of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Brussels, Belgium, 14-20 May 2001), donors agreed "to meet expeditiously the targets of 0.15 per cent or 0.20 per cent of GDP as ODA to LDCs [the least developed countries] as agreed".[3] In addition, the Declaration undertook to improve aid effectiveness and to implement a recommendation made by member States of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on untying ODA to the least developed countries.

9. With regard to benefits in the area of technical cooperation, an integrated framework for trade-related technical assistance, including strengthening of human and institutional capacities, is currently in place to assist the least developed countries in their trade activities. The integrated framework — which is jointly managed by WTO, the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Trade Centre — aims at maximizing the benefits that the least developed countries can derive from the technical assistance provided by those institutions.

V. The case of Botswana

10. Botswana is the only country to have graduated from least developed country status. The 1991 triennial review carried out by the Committee found that it met the criteria for graduation. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/206, took note of the Committee's recommendation to graduate Botswana and decided that its graduation would be completed following a transition period of three years, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the resolution. The country was graduated in 1994, following the two consecutive triennial reviews in which it met the criteria for graduation. Its pre-graduation transition thus covered the period 1991-1994, whereas its post-graduation transition occurred after 1994.

11. Botswana's total net receipts of ODA fell from $136 million in 1991 to $89 million in 1994 but rose to $122 million in 1997 (in current prices) (see table 1). However, global ODA flows (that is, to all countries) also decreased between 1991 and 1997. The share of Botswana in the reduced total ODA flows fell between 1991 and 1994 but, by 1997, was higher than in 1991. Similarly, its share in total net ODA flows to sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 0.77 per cent in 1991 to 0.47 per cent in 1994 but rose to 0.86 per cent by 1997. There is no information on changes in trade preferences, but Botswana's exports fell from $2,328 million in 1991 to $2,285 million in 1994 and rose to $2,824 million by 1997 (in constant 1995 prices) (see table 2). Its share of the total value of sub-Saharan African exports (in current

prices) fell from 2.82 per cent in 1991 to 2.75 per cent in 1994 and 1.9 per cent in 1999.

12. The particular case of Botswana is insufficient to draw conclusions about the consequences of the loss of least developed country status, because there are many other factors responsible for variations in aid and export receipts. One of the reasons for Botswana's graduation may have been that it was a special case in terms of its export base. The consequences of graduation, therefore, cannot be specified without a more detailed examination of the nature of the post-graduation transition. This would require information from donors and trading partners on existing benefits to potential graduation candidates and on changes that might occur as a result of graduation.

VI. Recommendations to the Council

13. With regard to the two different interpretations of the transition period, it is recommended that the Council maintain the three-year pre-graduation transition period but also stress the importance of the "post-graduation" transition period as crucial for maintaining the positive development prospects of the country.

14. Available information suggests that there is no well-defined set of benefits available to or received by countries designated as the least developed. The benefits vary among donors and are generally related to trade preferences and to the volume of ODA, but the Secretariat does not have detailed information on the specific benefits offered by industrial countries. It is, therefore, impossible, at the present time, to make concrete recommendations on additional measures that could be taken to ensure a smooth transition for graduating countries. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the benefits available to the graduated country should be reduced gradually, according to the specific needs of the country, rather than immediately. It is possible, however, to envisage that such recommendations would probably need to be shaped on a case-by-case basis and thus targeted at different least developed countries.

15. The Committee for Development Policy has suggested that relevant development partners and multilateral organizations should be requested to make available information on their likely response to a country's graduation, before the fourth session of the Committee (April 2002). Such information should include measures to be taken with regard to loss of benefits in the areas of trade, financial aid and technical assistance. If such information is made available, the Secretariat would be in a position to evaluate the potential consequences of graduation more precisely and to identify concrete measures that could be taken to ensure a smooth transition.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 13* (E/2000/33).

[2] See World Trade Organization, "Market access for the least developed countries: Where are the obstacles?" (WT/LDC/HL/19), paper prepared by the OECD secretariat, 21 October 1997.

[3] See A/CONF.191/L.20, para. 8.

Table 1
Official development assistance (ODA) to Botswana, 1990-1999

(Millions of United States dollars)

Aid recipient	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Botswana	148	136	114	134	89	90	75	122	106	61
Sub-Saharan Africa	17 452	17 697	19 122	17 361	18 894	18 387	16 083	14 214	13 569	12 006
World	57 282	61 865	61 437	56 809	60 929	59 610	56 400	48 296	50 212	51 568
Percentage share of Botswana in total ODA	0.26	0.22	0.19	0.24	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.25	0.21	0.12
Percentage share of Botswana in ODA to sub-Saharan Africa	0.85	0.77	0.60	0.77	0.47	0.49	0.46	0.86	0.78	0.51

Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Cooperation* (various years).

Table 2
Botswana's international trade, 1990-1998

(Millions of United States dollars)

	Imports, current prices			*Imports, current prices*[a]			*Exports, current prices*			*Exports, current prices*[a]		
Year[a]	*Botswana*	*Sub-Saharan Africa*	*Share (%)*	*Botswana*	*Sub-Saharan Africa*	*Share (%)*	*Botswana*	*Sub-Saharan Africa*	*Share (%)*	*Botswana*	*Sub-Saharan Africa*	*Share (%)*
1990	1 887	72 759	2.59	2 213	77 159	2.87	2 087	78 388	2.66	2 217	74 412	2.98
1991	1 805	73 380	2.46	2 046	78 864	2.59	2 091	74 013	2.82	2 295	74 482	3.08
1992	1 724	81 549	2.11	1 885	79 439	2.37	1 998	78 276	2.55	2 140	74 396	2.88
1993	1 562	76 154	2.05	1 716	81 933	2.09	1 960	71 595	2.74	2 112	76 854	2.75
1994	1 597	80 251	1.99	1 705	84 716	2.01	2 124	77 229	2.75	2 253	80 666	2.79
1995	1 765	94 226	1.87	1 765	94 121	1.88	2 435	87 429	2.78	2 435	87 418	2.79
1996	1 792	95 409	1.88	1 927	101 742	1.89	2 657	96 403	2.76	2 835	96 562	2.94
1997	1 766	103 370	1.71	1 945	108 131	1.80	2 210	96 837	2.28	2 785	100 843	2.76
1998	1 646	99 260	1.66	1 971	110 289	1.79	1 705	86 652	1.97	2 610	103 856	2.51
1999	1 982	99 692	1.99	2 044	111 526	1.83	1 650	87 079	1.90	2 448	103 890	2.36

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators, 2001* (CD-ROM).

[a] The base year for constant prices is 1995.

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Consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2001

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. In resolution 1998/46, the Economic and Social Council agreed that the Secretariat should produce a consolidated report for the consideration of the Council that looks at linkages between the functional commissions and highlights the key points on which the Council needs to consider taking action. The resolution also noted that the Council should, for its part, ensure that it reviews the above-mentioned recommendations, concentrating especially on horizontal and cross-cutting issues, with a view, in particular, to ensuring consistency between recommendations presented by different functional commissions. In past years, the consolidated report analysed selected themes dealt with by the functional commissions over a period of time. In 2000, that period covered the years 1998-2000 (see E/2000/85).

2. Building on that analysis, this year's consolidated report focuses on the work of the Commissions implemented in 2001. The report consists of two parts. Part I first analyses the follow-up by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2000; secondly, it analyses the work of the Commissions in 2001 and identifies the main common themes, issues and approaches that emerged during the reporting period. The analysis is intended to provide the Council with a holistic view of the issues and themes of common interest to several, or all the Commissions in the course of 2001, in order to facilitate the Council's role of providing overall policy guidance. Issues dealt with by a single commission are not covered in the report. Part II reviews the methods of work of the Commissions, including multi-year work programmes, in relation to the guidance provided by the Council in relevant resolutions.

3. The United Nations Forum on Forests is scheduled to hold its first substantive session from 11 to 22 June 2001, that is, after the completion of the present report. As the Forum is a subsidiary body of the Council and operates under the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council, its work will be included in the analysis of future consolidated reports.

I. Substantive aspects of the work of the Commissions in 2001

A. Follow-up by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2000

4. All functional commissions were seized of the outcome of the Council's substantive session of July 2000 so as to ensure that its policy recommendations could be taken into account in the work of its subsidiary bodies and to further enhance the coordination of the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies (see E/CN.6/2001/11, letter dated 4 October 2000 from the President of the Council to the Chairpersons). In his letter, the Council President identified a number of resolutions and decisions for follow-up, and highlighted in particular the Council's Ministerial Declaration of the 2000 high-level segment on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy; agreed conclusions 2000/1 of the coordination segment,[1] and agreed conclusions 2000/2 of the coordination segment. The latter, dealing with integrated and coordinated follow-up

to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, are the subject of a separate report (E/2001/73).

5. Table 1 below summarizes the actions and steps taken by the Commissions as a follow-up to the policy guidance provided by the Council in 2000. It also shows any input provided by the Secretariat to facilitate such action.

Table 1
Follow-up action by Commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2000

Commission	*Economic and Social Council guidance*	*Secretariat input*	*Follow-up by Commission*
Status of Women	Ministerial Declaration on Information and Communications Technology	Note by the Secretariat on follow-up to Council resolutions and decisions (E/CN.6/2001/10). The report focused on: Ministerial Declaration on ICT; agreed conclusions 2000/2; res. 2000/26, and 2000/27.	In 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women will discuss as one of two thematic issues "Participation and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women".
	Resolution 2000/26	Idem.	The Commission will address eradication of poverty in 2002, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world (multi-year programme of work, E/CN.6/2001/L.8).
	Agreed conclusions 1997/2		The Commission reaffirmed the importance of gender mainstreaming for the achievement of gender equality, and noted ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General, the United Nations system and the ACC Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality. It called on the Council to establish a regular item, in its general segment, on gender mainstreaming; and to devote a future coordination segment, by 2005, to a review of the implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 (E/CN.6/2001/L.6).
Statistical	Ministerial Declaration on ICT	Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/2001/21) on elements of Council action that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. It focused on: Ministerial Declaration on ICT; agreed conclusions 2000/2; res. 2000/27.	The Commission noted current and planned work on methodology and collection of statistics of e-commerce at the national and international levels (agenda item 6 (h)). The Commission considered that the actions outlined in the report of the Secretary-General were consistent with the Council's requests and adequately reflected the relevant work being undertaken and planned by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division (agenda item 6 (g)).

Commission	*Economic and Social Council guidance*	*Secretariat input*	*Follow-up by Commission*
		Included a summary of United Nations Statistics Division's advisory services and technical assistance activities on upgrading IT and hardware for statistical applications in several regions.	
	Resolution 2000/27	Report of the Secretary-General on coordination of development indicators (E/CN.3/2001/16).	The Commission accepted the invitation by the Council to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of conference indicators and considered this work as a welcome opportunity to contribute its technical expertise to the ongoing debate on indicators. In this context the Commission emphasized the importance of the need (i) for national statistical capacity-building, (ii) for the effective user-producer dialogue on indicators and (iii) to reduce the overburdening of countries with data requests. It agreed with the proposed action plan proposed by the Statistics Division for the implementation of the resolution (E/CN.3/2001/16, annex II), agreed to the appointment by the Chair of a "friends of the Chair advisory group" to technically validate the conference indicators, to elaborate recommendations for a limited list of indicators and to make proposals for a mechanism of statistical review of future indicators. The Statistical Commission expressed its doubts that a single limited set of indicators could satisfy the various national, regional and specialized sectoral needs and emphasized the need for flexibility (agenda item 6 (c)).
Population and Development	Ministerial Declaration on ICT	Report of the Secretary-General on programme implementation and progress of work in 2000 of the Population Division (E/CN.9/2001/5, paras. 33-36), summarizing efforts to increase access to substantive population information at interregional, regional and national levels, through the Internet-based POPIN	The Bureau emphasized the importance of POPIN and its usefulness both from an academic and a policy point of view and strongly recommended that it should be continued with the support of UNFPA and the Population Division (E/CN.9/2001/CRP.1).

Commission	*Economic and Social Council guidance*	*Secretariat input*	*Follow-up by Commission*
		(Population Information Network), and on technical cooperation to strengthen national capacity in this regard.	
Human Rights	Agreed conclusions 1997/2, 1998/2		Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/50 invites the Council to give attention to the implementation of Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 and 1998/2; and welcomes the Commission on the Status of Women's request that the Council devote a future coordination segment, by 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2.
Science and Technology for Development	Ministerial Declaration on ICT	Presentation by H.E. Jose Maria Figueres, Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Group on Information and Communications Technology	Draft resolution I (for adoption by the Council), in which the Council would decide to follow up its work on ICTs through its Bureau or, if necessary, through the creation of a subcommittee of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The Council would also decide that the Commission, during the inter-sessional period 2001-2003, cover the theme "Technology development and capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society".
Sustainable Development	Ministerial Declaration on ICT		Decision 9/4 on information for decision-making and participation also addresses the role and use of information and communications technologies, including the Internet, for sustainable development.
	Resolution 2000/27		In decision 9/4, the Commission also discussed approaches to indicators of sustainable development in the light of Council resolution 2000/27.
Human Settlements	Agreed conclusions 2000/1	Ways of implementing the agreed conclusions were discussed in a report of the Executive Director (HS/C/18/4).	Resolution 18/5 on international cooperation and the review of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda welcomes agreed conclusions 2000/1, and requests the Executive Director to take steps for their implementation.
Social Development	Resolution 2000/25 on volunteerism	Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2001/6).	Resolution on volunteering and social development highlights the role of volunteering, including government and United Nations system support for the creation of a favourable environment in support of voluntary action for social development.

6. The work of the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women was facilitated by a report of the Secretary-General and a note by the Secretariat analysing the Council's policy guidance of 2000 for its particular relevance to these two bodies, together with indications of the actions already taken and proposals for further action (E/CN.3/2001/21, and E/CN.6/2001/10, respectively). Implementation of Council agreed conclusions 2000/1 was covered in a report submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements. The Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Group on Information and Communications Technology made a presentation to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

7. In an effort to promote more harmonization and coordination in the work of the functional commissions, a note was prepared for the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2001/L.5) on the ongoing activities of the other eight functional commissions for their statistical implications, and in order to facilitate such activities to be taken into account by the Statistical Commission in its own present and future work. Its focus was on statistics, data and information in a broad sense. The note proposed to draw out the specific implications for international statistical work in two areas, namely, those of the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development, for the thirty-third session of the Statistical Commission (2002). Since 1997, the analysis of the work of all functional commissions in regard to their attention to gender issues in follow-up to the Beijing Conference has been submitted in an annual report to the Council (see, for example, E/2000/77).

8. From table 1 above, the following conclusions can be drawn with regard to follow-up by Commissions to policy guidance that emanated from the Council's substantive session of 2000:

(a) Information and communications technology (Ministerial Declaration 2000): This issue has been addressed from various perspectives by five Commissions in the course of 2001, and will remain an issue of attention in the future. The Council's adoption of the Ministerial Declaration has given further impetus to this work. The attention of the Commissions has focused on the use of ICT as a tool in furthering the goals and objectives of their work. Questions of participation and access with regard to ICT will be a priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2003, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will carry out work on technology development and capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society during its next inter-sessional period.

(b) Gender mainstreaming (Council agreed conclusions 1997/2): The Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights reaffirmed the importance of gender mainstreaming for the achievement of gender equality, and further action by the Council to review implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 was called for.

(c) Development indicators (Council resolution 2000/27): Both the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women addressed indicators at their 2001 sessions. The question of indicators for monitoring conference follow-up has been on the Council's agenda in the past, and is expected to be taken up again in 2002 on the basis of the technical expertise that will be contributed by the Statistical Commission.

B. Analysis of common themes, issues and approaches in the work of the Commissions in 2001

9. The following section analyses the work of the Commissions in 2001 and identifies the main common themes, issues and approaches of the reporting period. The analysis is intended to provide the Council with a holistic view of the issues and themes of common interest to several, or all of the Commissions in the course of 2001, in order to facilitate the Council's role of providing overall policy guidance.

10. In accordance with a Council recommendation encouraging each commission to adopt practices best suited to its mandate and responsibilities (resolution 1998/46, annex II, para. 1), Commissions have generally kept their methods of work under review, adjusting them as necessary. The major difference in working methods for purposes of the present analysis is the fact that several Commissions have adopted multi-year programmes of work, according to which, each year they consider different priority topics or issues. Other Commissions consider the same or similar issues over a number of years, and also adopt outcomes on these discussions annually. When reviewing the work of the functional commissions over a one-year time period, the difference in working methods is relevant as the annual output produced is the result of a particular working method rather than an indication of the limited attention to some issues.

11. As in the past, in 2001, the functional commissions have moved forward policy development in major issues of concern to the global community. Through their output, they contributed sectoral expertise to a number of ongoing processes.

12. Poverty eradication, a focus for most of the functional commissions in the past (see E/2000/85, table 4, and paras. 27-32), took on additional importance during the reporting period in the light of the commitment undertaken in the Millennium Declaration to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people living in extreme poverty. Issues in relation to an enabling environment remained under consideration. Environment and development issues are taking on renewed momentum as preparations intensify for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Science and technology, including ICT, received sustained attention.

13. Gender mainstreaming in sectoral areas has become more systematic in the reporting period. HIV/AIDS was once again, as in past years (see E/2000/85, table 8, and paras. 47-50), a focus in a number of commissions. Shelter and human settlements questions received more attention than in the past, reflecting the comprehensive five-year review of Habitat II (6-8 June 2001).

14. Commissions also dealt with means of implementation, including resource mobilization, capacity-building, data collection and research, and information and knowledge sharing. One aspect which figures prominently in the work of the Commissions but had not been part of the analysis in the past is highlighted for the first time in the present consolidated report, namely, participation and partnerships.

1. Poverty eradication

15. The commitment to reduce poverty and to prevent people from falling into poverty was an overarching theme in the discussions of the Commission for Social Development on enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world. A Chairperson's summary of a panel discussion reflected the complex nature of social protection and the diverse challenges faced by

Governments and the international community in developing viable policy approaches.

16. Poverty eradication, including environmental, financial and social aspects, was an integral part of the session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In its work on energy, for example, the Commission highlighted access to affordable energy services in rural areas as a particular challenge in halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 (decision 9/1). Transport was stressed as an important factor in policies and measures to eradicate poverty and promote gender equality (decision 9/3).

17. The Commission on Human Rights continued its ongoing discussion of the human rights dimensions of poverty, including as they relate to extreme poverty (resolution 2001/31), the right to food (resolution 2001/25), and the enjoyment of the whole range of human rights in general. In several of these areas, the Commission has appointed Special Rapporteurs to provide input to its discussions. The Commission has highlighted the particular vulnerability and disadvantage of persons and communities living in extreme poverty, as well as the gender aspects in the context of human rights and poverty. Attention was paid to the role and contribution of the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, towards the eradication of poverty through a rights-based approach. The Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was requested to consider the need to develop guiding principles on the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty.

18. The Commission on Human Settlements considered that equal access to land and legal security of tenure were key elements in slum upgrading and in poverty eradication strategies (resolutions 18/10 and 18/3). The Commission on the Status of Women emphasized the link between policies towards the eradication of poverty and women's empowerment and women's increased capacity to deal with the adverse effects of HIV/AIDS and to protect themselves from the spread of the pandemic (agreed conclusions on HIV/AIDS). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs considered the question of poverty eradication in conjunction with alternative development programmes to the illicit cultivation of drug crops. In a draft resolution, it called for greater support for such programmes, including market access (E/CN.7/2001/L.4/Rev.1).

19. Commissions continue to assess the links between sectoral policies and poverty reduction and eradication. This effort is taking on new urgency as steps are being taken towards achieving the quantitative goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration. Commissions could be invited to assess, in greater depth, the impact of particular policies on poverty reduction goals, and to identify good practices and lessons learned so as to increase the sharing of knowledge among all relevant actors, including functional commissions.

2. Enabling environment

20. The importance of building an enabling environment for development through a broad range of actions, as exemplified in the work of functional commissions was highlighted in last year's consolidated report (E/2000/85, table 2, and paras. 18-23). Issues such as macroeconomic policy frameworks conducive to development, external debt, ODA and finance for development, international trade and

commodities, globalization and structural adjustment are commonly considered under this general heading. Some aspects of the enabling environment are taking on particular visibility as preparations continue for the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place in March 2002 in Mexico. The special session of the General Assembly to review progress in the implementation of Habitat II (6-8 June 2001) is also expected to cover issues of an enabling environment as they pertain to human settlements development.

21. During the reporting period, the treatment of the issue of an enabling environment and its sub-themes varied among commissions. While both the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women reviewed many related aspects during 2000 as part of the overall review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of their respective conferences, their treatment of this issue in 2001 was more limited, especially in the Commission for Social Development.

22. The Commission on Sustainable Development gave the most consistent and in-depth attention to the question of international cooperation for an enabling environment, and in particular to resources for development (decision 9/5). It also discussed the need for financial resources, including ODA and debt relief, in relation to energy, transport, and protection of the atmosphere (decisions 9/1, 9/2 and 9/3), stressing the need to fulfil the financial commitments of Agenda 21.

23. The Commission on Human Rights continued to deal with debt-related and resource issues in relation to an enabling environment and human rights (including resolutions 2001/27, on structural adjustment policies and foreign debt; 2001/9, on the right to development; 2001/25, on the right to food; 2001/30, on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights; and 2001/73, on international solidarity). It also continued consideration of globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights, requesting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a comprehensive report on this subject, in cooperation with UNCTAD (resolution 2001/32). It should be noted that the Commission on Human Rights was able to reach consensus only on some of these questions.

24. Several Commissions expressed support for efforts to alleviate the debt burdens, especially through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. This was the case in the Commission on the Status of Women, which considered such debt relief as an important element in achieving the goals of HIV/AIDS prevention for women (Commission on the Status of Women, agreed conclusions). Opportunities that might arise from debt relief and ODA for human settlements development were highlighted by the Commission on Human Settlements (18/5).

25. As a cross-cutting issue common to the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, an enabling environment and its sub-themes continued to be part, albeit not to the same extent, of the work of the Commissions as they reviewed particular topics within their mandates.

3. Environment and development

26. During the reporting period, two commissions, namely the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Population and Development, dealt with environment and development questions, or aspects thereof, as priority issues. The Commission on Sustainable Development considered atmosphere,

energy and transport as sectoral and economic themes. The Commission highlighted linkages to related issues and problems, especially the interdependency of energy, transport and atmosphere. It pointed to complex challenges of policy-making, resource and technology requirements, and equity as well as equality issues. With its 2001 session, the Commission completed its 1998-2002 work programme devoted to particular sectoral and cross-sectoral themes emanating from Agenda 21 and its five-year review of 1997. At its tenth session (2002), the Commission will act as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2-11 September 2002).

27. The theme of this year's session of the Commission on Population and Development, as a contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, focused on population, environment and development and the critical linkages between these issues. The Commission highlighted linkages among population, consumption and production, the environment and natural resources, and human health. In assessing these linkages, particular attention was drawn to levels, trends and differentials of mortality, fertility, distribution and mobility, and the role of population and development policies, as well as gender perspective, and the need for further research in these areas (resolution 2001/1).

28. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice addressed the links between transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna (draft resolution II for adoption by the Council). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs dealt with alternative development to support countries affected by illicit cultivation of narcotic crops as one of the means for countering the world drug problem (draft resolution E/CN.7/2001/L.4/Rev.1).

29. The Commission on Human Rights has been concerned for some time with the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights. It considered the adverse impact of such actions for a sound environment (resolution 2001/35). The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme were invited to organize a joint seminar on progress made in promoting and protecting human rights in relation to environmental questions and in the framework of Agenda 21 (decision 2001/111).

30. The Statistical Commission continued its work in the field of natural resources and environment statistics, where the main focus was on revising the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA). It is the stated intention of the Statistical Commission to approve the revised SEEA in 2002.

31. The work of the Commission on Population and Development complemented that of the Commission on Sustainable Development during the reporting period, especially as it provided a stronger research base for considering the links between environment, population and development in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development. Other Commissions dealt with specific issues that could usefully be taken into account in the preparations for Rio+10. The Commission on the Status of Women will consider the gender perspective in environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters in 2002, thus also contributing to the World Summit.

4. Science and technology, including Information and Communications Technology

32. Issues relating to science and technology, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT), were taken up by several Commissions in 2001. The Commission on Sustainable Development addressed the need for access to and transfer of technologies in the sectoral areas dealt with at its session (i.e., atmosphere, transport, energy, as well as international cooperation for an enabling environment), and pointed to the role of technology cooperation in this regard.

33. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development assessed the role and potential of biotechnology in a number of fields, including health, environment and agriculture. It highlighted actions to be taken by Governments, with the support of the international community, to establish national policy regimes that support development in biotechnology. In highlighting the Council's work of 2000 on ICT in creating a global knowledge-based economy, the Commission proposed to the Council that it take on an active role in this area, if necessary through the creation of a subcommittee of the Commission (draft resolution I). The Commission took a particular interest in the United Nations ICT Task Force, called for by the Council in resolution 2000/29, and held a dialogue with the Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Group on Information and Communications Technologies.

34. The Statistical Commission noted current and planned work on methodology and collection of statistics of e-commerce at the national and international levels (item 6 (h)). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs highlighted the role of modern technology in the collection and dissemination of information on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. It recommended a number of steps towards expanding the use of the national database system by implementing the computer and telecommunication system for international and national drug control developed by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (draft resolution E/CN.7/2001/L.13/Rev.1). The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was concerned about the increasing use of sophisticated technologies in illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna (draft resolution II).

35. Information technology, especially the Internet, facilitate information and knowledge sharing through databases, collections of best practices and lessons learned. This was emphasized by the Commission on Human Settlements, which encouraged the expansion of the Habitat Best Practices Database in sustainable human settlements development and urban poverty reduction at the local level. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development drew attention to the newly created electronic Science and Technology for Development Network (STDev) as a means for information dissemination on science and technology, including biotechnology. The Statistical Commission expressed its support for the statistical web sites of the United Nations, including good practices in official statistics containing country practices. The Commission on Sustainable Development addressed the role and use of information and communications technologies, including the Internet, for sustainable development (decision 9/4). The Commission on Population and Development has in the past expressed its support for the Internet-based POPIN (Population Information Network) and its usefulness from an academic as well as policy point of view, and the Commission on the Status

of Women has welcomed WomenWatch, the United Nations Internet gateway on the advancement and empowerment of women.

36. Commissions continue to assess the role of science and technology for their areas of responsibility. Growing interest and focus is being placed on the role and potential of ICT in pursuing the goals and commitments of major United Nations conferences, summits and General Assembly special sessions. The Council's Ministerial Declaration of 2000 can be expected to continue to provide guidance to the work of the Commissions in this field. The Council could encourage its Commissions to strengthen their attention to the role of ICT for development in their areas of responsibility.

5. Gender mainstreaming

37. The achievement of gender equality as an end in itself, but also as a key aspect in the achievement of other goals, is becoming a well-established part of the work of the functional commissions. While the Commission on the Status of Women has primary responsibility in this area, other commissions are using the gender mainstreaming strategy to reflect gender issues in their work.

38. During the reporting period, the Commission on the Status of Women dealt with two priority issues, namely, HIV/AIDS, and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The agreed conclusions adopted on these subjects constituted inputs into the respective upcoming high-level events (special session of the General Assembly, and World Conference).

39. As in past years, the Commission on Human Rights considered the integration of the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, calling on human rights mechanisms and other bodies to mainstream a gender perspective in their work (resolution 2001/50). It also emphasized human rights concerns of particular relevance to women, as well as gender considerations, in many areas, including in country-specific and thematic resolutions. In addition, it dealt with traffic in women and girls (2001/48), and the elimination of violence against women (2001/49). Traffic in women and girls and the elimination of violence against women are core concerns of the Commission on the Status of Women in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its +5 review, and will be taken up in 2003, in accordance with its multi-year programme of work. The General Assembly deals with both issues on a biennialized basis.

40. Other Commissions, notably the Commission on Human Settlements, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission for Social Development, and the Commission on Population and Development, addressed gender perspectives as part of sectoral topics. In doing so, gender-specific constraints that women face and that require action were identified in conjunction with security of tenure and access to land (Commission on Human Settlements, 18/10), transport (Commission on Sustainable Development, 9/3), energy technologies (Commission on Sustainable Development, 9/1), and participation, including in decision-making (Commission for Social Development, resolution on volunteerism; Commission on Sustainable Development 9/4; Commission on Human Settlements, 18/10). The Commission on Science and Technology for Development recommended that the Council renew the mandate of its Gender Advisory Board for a further four years. The Statistical

Commission continued consideration of gender statistics, in particular gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work (item 3 (c)).

41. Attention to gender equality issues by the functional commissions has been greatly supported by the Council's guidance, in agreed conclusions 1997/2, on gender mainstreaming. Detailed analysis of the work of all functional commissions concerning gender aspects is contained in E/2001/78, Report on follow-up to, and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

42. In the light of the cross-cutting nature of gender equality, the Commission on the Status of Women continues its coordination with other functional commissions, in particular the Commission on Human Rights (see para. 99 below). Further efforts in this regard may be desirable in selected areas, such as violence against women, traffic in women, and the integration of the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system by, for example, biennializing items, preparing joint reports, or identifying lead commissions. The Commission on the Status of Women has recommended that the Council continue to support gender mainstreaming by establishing a regular item on its agenda, in the context of its general segment, on gender mainstreaming, and by reviewing implementation of Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 at a future coordination segment, by 2005 (Commission on the Status of Women draft resolution).

6. HIV/AIDS

43. The urgency of addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic was confirmed by the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in June 2001, and the personal priority accorded to this challenge by the Secretary-General. Efforts are under way to establish a Global AIDS and Health Fund, for which US$ 7-10 billion are being sought annually. UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, which has seven co-sponsors (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO and World Bank), advocates for worldwide action against HIV/AIDS.

44. Several commissions covered this question in 2001. The Commission on the Status of Women drew attention to the increasing percentage of women being infected by HIV, the higher infection rate of teenage girls compared to those of teenage boys, and to the fact that women constitute 55 per cent of those living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. It recommended actions for: the empowerment of women; prevention; treatment, care and support; and an enabling environment for regional and international cooperation. It also called for the full integration of a gender perspective in the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (25-27 June 2001). In adopting these agreed conclusions, the Commission continued work it had done in this area in 1999 and 2000.

45. The Commission on Human Rights dealt with the protection of human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS (resolution 2001/51), covering issues such as prevention, access to treatment and care, and the prohibition of HIV-related discrimination. It stressed the need for protecting HIV-related human rights, and called on Member States, various human rights mechanisms and United Nations entities to address HIV-related human rights. It also dealt, for the first time, with the specific question of access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, and addressed the need for policies to promote availability of pharmaceuticals,

accessibility without discrimination, and appropriateness and good quality of pharmaceuticals (2001/33). HIV/AIDS was also part of resolutions dealing with freedom of opinion and expression in relation to education on and prevention of HIV infection (2001/47); and on the rights of the child (2001/75), calling for support to children and their families affected by HIV/AIDS, and for effective prevention. These resolutions built on work done by the Commission in 1999 and 2000.

46. The Commission on Population and Development reviewed the demographic implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with the impact of HIV/AIDS being explicitly incorporated in the projections of the population of highly affected countries. The number of countries in this category has risen from 34 in 1998 to 45 in 2000, as reflected in the report on world demographic trends (E/CN.9/2001/4, paras. 37-45). Of these countries, 35 are in sub-Saharan Africa.

47. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs discussed the question of HIV/AIDS during its operational segment. It called on the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to continue to work closely with countries where drug injection is a driving force behind HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

48. The special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS can be expected to build on the work of the intergovernmental machinery in recent years. Following its conclusion, efforts should be undertaken to ensure that relevant Commissions, as well as the Council in its coordination and oversight responsibilities, integrates the special session's outcome into their own work for effective implementation and follow-up.

7. Shelter and human settlements

49. The Commission on Human Settlements has lead responsibility in this sector in the follow-up to Habitat II, and also serves as preparatory body for the five-year review of Habitat II (special session of the General Assembly, 6-8 June 2001). During its eighteenth session, the Commission dealt with security of tenure and urban governance as its special themes, which also formed the subject of the dialogue with local authorities and other partners. It provided further guidance on the implementation of the two global campaigns concerning secure tenure and urban governance. Particular emphasis is placed on the need for women and those living in poverty to have access to land and security of residential tenure (resolution 18/3). The role of local authorities, particularly in the two global campaigns, also received extensive attention (18/10).

50. Other Commissions addressed various aspects of shelter and human settlements issues during the reporting period. The Commission on Human Rights continued its consideration of adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living. The work of the Commission's Special Rapporteur, appointed in 2000, provided the impetus for this discussion. Particular emphasis was placed by the Commission on ensuring that questions of adequate housing were integrated into the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and into the operational activities of the United Nations system. To that end, strengthened cooperation between the OHCHR and the UNCHS was encouraged, including consideration of a joint housing rights programme (resolution 2000/28). A second aspect of the Commission's work focused on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing. This question was particularly highlighted for attention in the development of a housing

rights programme (resolution 2000/34). The Commission on the Status of Women had addressed the question of land rights discrimination in the past (resolution 42/1 of 1998). The Statistical Commission considered human settlements statistics (item 3 (a)).

51. Issues relating to population, environment and development in urban settings were presented to the Commission on Population and Development. Focus was placed on: the relationship between city size, rate of growth and urban environmental problems; the city environment; environmental impacts on urban health; and cities and sustainable development. These research findings contributed to the five-year review and appraisal of Habitat II (resolution 2001/1).

52. In its consideration of transport issues, the Commission on Sustainable Development highlighted the environmental impact of transport-related activities and infrastructure, including their effect on human settlements, urban conditions and land use (decision 9/3).

53. The work of the Commissions in 2001 on shelter and human settlements was in large part in line with their particular perspectives. Several cross-cutting dimensions, in particular the human rights and the gender perspective, can be noted. This provides opportunities, especially in the follow-up to action taken, for several Commissions to seek greater interaction in future, including for example, joint reports, exchange of relevant reports and resolutions, joint Bureau meetings, or joint programming, as suggested by the Commission on Human Rights.

8. Means of implementation

54. Commissions, within their areas of responsibility, commonly put forward recommendations for action at the national, regional and international levels, and in many instances invite different stakeholders to contribute to their implementation, in addition to Governments. In addition to policy action, Commissions specify various means of implementation that are expected to be most conducive to achieving identified policy goals. Particular attention is frequently given to resource mobilization, capacity-building, research and data collection, and information and knowledge sharing.

(a) Resource mobilization

55. Several Commissions drew attention to the linkages between the achievement of progress in particular areas and the availability of financial resources and mechanisms to developing countries. They called for the support by the international community in this regard, including of United Nations Funds and Programmes, the international financial institutions and other donors.

56. The Commission on Sustainable Development, drawing attention to the need to fulfil all financial commitments of Agenda 21, underlined the need for financial resources to meet the challenges and interdependencies in the areas of energy, transport and atmosphere. The Commission on Human Settlements called for the mobilization of additional international financial and technical support for the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (resolution 18/5). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs exhorted the international financial institutions and other potential donors to provide financial assistance, for example, to States most affected by the transit of drugs, for alternative development programmes to

eliminate illicit drug crops, and support various regional and national drug control efforts. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development proposed that a special trust fund be established within UNCTAD for activities in the area of science and technology for development (draft resolution II). The Commission on Human Rights highlighted the need to mobilize technical and financial resources in several areas, including in conjunction with the right to food, and with structural adjustment policies and foreign debt. The Commission on Population and Development regularly reviews the flow of financial resources for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

57. Other aspects of resource mobilization, in particular ODA and debt relief, were raised by a number of Commissions (see paras. 22-24 above).

(b) Capacity-building

58. During the reporting period, several Commissions emphasized the need for capacity-building in the thematic areas under review. In general, Governments were invited to focus on this area at the national level, with the support of the international community, especially the entities of the United Nations system, as well as private actors. Depending on the area, capacity-building should be pursued for both, Government and civil society actors, through training, human resources development, institutional development, strengthening of technological and management capacities, and networking and related activities. Technical cooperation and financial resources are needed towards those ends.

59. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development, for example, devoted its inter-sessional period 1999-2001 and its 2001 session to the question of national capacity-building in biotechnology, focusing on capacity-building, legal and regulatory issues, and on public awareness and participation in science policy-making in biotechnology (see E/CN.16/2001/2). It encouraged Governments to establish policy regimes in support of biotechnology development, and invited the international community and UNCTAD to support such efforts in a coordinated manner (draft resolution I). The Commission on Sustainable Development recommended international cooperation to enhance capacity-building in the sectors chosen for consideration at its 2001 session, i.e., transport, protection of the atmosphere, energy services, and use of information and communications technologies (decisions 9/1, 9/2 9/3 and 9/4), including human and institutional development, planning and technological capacity. The Statistical Commission continued to support initiatives for statistical capacity-building at the national level, including, for example, on indicators and a new initiative on household surveys particularly in Africa (action under items 6 (c) and 6 (i)). Support to strengthen capacity of Governments, as well as of women's groups and networks in fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic was highlighted by the Commission on the Status of Women (agreed conclusions). Capacity-building and technical cooperation were considered important elements in international drug control efforts, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs highlighted opportunities for increasing support for capacity-building in a number of areas. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice identified the need for capacity-building in several areas, including to support the implementation of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto, and to combat the transfer of funds from illicit origins, particularly corruption (draft resolutions E/CN.15/2001/L.9/Rev.3, and L.12/Rev.1). The Commission on the Status of Women intends to take into account

institutional capacity-building as a cross-cutting issue in its future thematic work (multi-year programme of work).

(c) Data collection and research

60. Another area frequently highlighted by Commissions as tools for accelerated implementation of recommended action was data collection and research. The Statistical Commission continued to provide leadership on data collection, methodology development, and dissemination instruments in various fields of economic, social and environmental statistics, and the Commission on Population and Development on analysis of population phenomena. Other Commissions, such as on the Status of Women, Human Rights, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements, emphasized during the reporting period the need for data disaggregated by sex, and for indicators in areas such as access to resources and basic services, decision-making, violence against women, and energy technologies. Further methodological development and harmonization was encouraged in areas such as city statistics (Statistical Commission, Commission on Human Settlements, and Commission on Population and Development), drug abuse and dependence and types of substances consumed (Commission on Narcotic Drugs), and transport-related information (Commission on Sustainable Development).

(d) Information and knowledge sharing

61. As noted by the Commission on Sustainable Development, significant gaps remain in the availability and uses of information in many countries. During the reporting period, Commissions have consistently emphasized the need for information and knowledge sharing to increase awareness of issues and improve capacity for action. Examples included the global campaigns for secure tenure and urban governance of the Commission on Human Settlements, emphasizing normative dialogue, awareness-raising, capacity-building and technical cooperation (Commission on Human Settlements, resolution 18/3). The Commission on Human Rights continued to emphasize information dissemination on human rights through the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights and the ongoing Decade for Human Rights Education. Information and knowledge sharing on technologies and policies were seen as conducive to achieving energy for sustainable development, and improved transportation systems, as noted by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Several Commissions covered the role of information and communications technologies, especially the Internet, to strengthen information and knowledge sharing (see para. 35 above).

62. Capacity-building is taking on particular urgency at a time when major emphasis is placed on national ownership in the development dialogue, including in processes such as the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF), and the Comprehensive Development Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (see also the reports on Operational Activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation at the substantive session of 2001 of the Council). The Council may seek further input from its functional commissions on the role of resource mobilization, capacity-building, research and data collection and information and knowledge sharing in their respective areas, with a particular focus on impact, gaps, good practices and lessons learned, and the types of capacity-building most commonly sought in the implementation of conference and summit outcomes. The

Council could also consider taking up this issue in a comprehensive manner at an appropriate time in one of its future coordination segments.

9. Partnerships and participation

63. While primary responsibility for implementing the outcomes of the conferences of the 1990s and their follow-up reviews rests with Governments, these documents also emphasize cooperation and partnerships with other actors for the achievement of stated goals. The Council, in its Ministerial communiqués, agreed conclusions and other policy guidance, has in general identified participation of and partnerships among multiple stakeholders as important action strategies. The question of partnerships with stakeholders is an important part of this year's coordination segment of the Council.

64. The importance of participation of, and partnership with, NGOs, civil society, local authorities and major groups, the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, regional development banks and other actors from the development cooperation community, as well as the private sector have been identified by Commissions during the reporting period for a broad range of activities. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its first thematic debate, discussed approaches to building partnerships within and across sectors, including health, education, law enforcement and justice. The Commission for Social Development highlighted volunteering as an important way for people to participate in societal development, (Commission for Social Development draft resolution) drawing attention to the International Year of Volunteers (2001). The importance of participation and partnerships in promoting gender equality has been a recurrent theme in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, most recently in relation to HIV/AIDS and multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women. Active partnerships have been established with Habitat Agenda partners in implementing the global campaigns for security of tenure and urban governance (Commission on Human Settlements). The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice continued work to promote effective community-based crime prevention. The role of the private sector, including through public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder approach and public participation was highlighted in the areas covered this year by the Commission on Sustainable Development, especially in energy development and transportation. Public-private and public-public partnerships were recommended as a mechanism in the mobilization of resources for sustainable development. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development encouraged partnerships involving Governments, academia and private enterprise, and including international cooperation, in biotechnology. The need for participation of young people as agents of change was raised by several Commissions, including by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in the development of prevention strategies targeting illicit drug use among this age group; the Commission on Human Settlements in conjunction with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda; and the Commission on the Status of Women in relation to racism affecting young women and men and the role of youth NGOs in educating young people to build societies based on respect and solidarity. In its thematic debate, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs focused on prevention education and early-intervention strategies and trends in drug abuse among children and young people. The Commission on Human Rights called on all relevant entities to include a child rights perspective in their work.

65. The Council could encourage the continued attention by the functional commissions to the involvement of all actors in implementation. It could invite the Commissions to expand and deepen their consideration of this issue by exploring productive forms of interaction among multiple stakeholders, and elaborate the types and forms of participation and partnerships which experience indicates are most conducive to progress in sectoral areas.

10. Summary of recommendations

66. For ease of reference, the recommendations contained in this section are summarized:

(a) Commissions continue to assess the links between sectoral policies and poverty reduction and eradication. This effort is taking on new urgency as steps are being taken towards achieving the quantitative goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration. Commissions could be invited to assess, in greater depth, the impact of particular policies on poverty reduction goals, and to identify good practices and lessons learned to increase the sharing of knowledge among all relevant actors, including functional commissions (see para. 19 above).

(b) Commissions continue to assess the role of science and technology for their areas of responsibility. Growing interest and focus is being placed on the role and potential of ICT in pursuing the goals and commitments of major United Nations conferences, summits and General Assembly special sessions. The Council's Ministerial Declaration of 2000 can be expected to continue to provide guidance to the work of the Commissions in this field. The Council could encourage its Commissions to strengthen their attention to the role of ICT for development in their areas of responsibility (see para. 36 above).

(c) In the light of the cross-cutting nature of gender equality, the Commission on the Status of Women continues its coordination with other functional commissions, in particular the Commission on Human Rights. Further efforts in this regard may be desirable in selected areas, such as violence against women, traffic in women and the integration of the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system by, for example, biennializing items, preparing joint reports, or identifying lead Commissions. The Commission on the Status of Women has recommended that the Council continue to support gender mainstreaming by establishing a regular item on its agenda, in the context of its general segment, on gender mainstreaming, and by reviewing implementation of Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 at a future coordination segment, by 2005 (Commission on the Status of Women draft resolution) (see para. 42 above).

(d) The special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS can be expected to build on the work of the intergovernmental machinery in recent years. Following its conclusion, efforts should be undertaken to ensure that relevant Commissions, as well as the Council in its coordination and oversight responsibilities, integrates the special session's outcome into their own work for effective implementation and follow-up (see para. 48 above).

(e) The work of the Commissions in 2001 on shelter and human settlements was in large part in line with their particular perspectives. Several cross-cutting dimensions, in particular the human rights and the gender perspective, can be noted. This provides opportunities, especially in the follow-up to action taken, for several

Commissions to seek greater interaction in future, including for example, joint reports, exchange of relevant reports and resolutions, joint Bureau meetings, or joint programming, as suggested by the Commission on Human Rights (see para. 53 above).

(f) Capacity-building is taking on particular urgency at a time when major emphasis is placed on national ownership in the development dialogue, including in processes such as the CCA/UNDAF, and the Comprehensive Development Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (see also the reports on Operational Activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation at the substantive session of 2001 of the Council). The Council may seek further input from its functional commissions on the role of resource mobilization, capacity-building, research and data collection and information and knowledge sharing in their respective areas, with a respective focus on impact, gaps, good practices and lessons learned, and the types of capacity-building most commonly sought in the implementation of conference and summit outcomes. The Council could also consider taking up this issue in a comprehensive manner at an appropriate time in one of its future coordination segments (see para. 62 above).

(g) The Council could encourage the continued attention by the functional Commissions to the involvement of all actors in implementation. It could invite the Commissions to expand and deepen their consideration of this issue by exploring productive forms of interaction among multiple stakeholders, and elaborate the types and forms of participation and partnerships which experience indicates are most conducive to progress in sectoral areas (see para. 65 above).

II. Procedural aspects of the work of the Commissions in 2001

A. Overview of the work of the functional commissions in 2001

67. All functional commissions met during 2001.[2] Several continued to implement their multi-year programmes of work, and some also adopted new, or expanded existing, multi-year programmes, as summarized in the table below. Several commissions held debates on special themes.

68. In particular, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women elaborated work programmes for the period 2002 to 2006. The Commission on Sustainable Development completed its work programme for the years 1998-2001. At its tenth session in 2002, the Commission for Social Development will act as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which will also include a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21. A new multi-year programme of work, to start in 2003 with the Commission's eleventh session, is expected to result from the Summit. The work programme of the Commission on Population and Development extends to 2003, and the Commission on Population and Development is expected to undertake a quinquennial review of the implementation of ICPD in 2004. The Statistical Commission has updated its work programme and expanded it up to the year 2004.

69. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Human Settlements have chosen the

themes for their thematic debates of 2002, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development has chosen the theme for its next inter-sessional period, which will also form the core of the work at its sixth session. The Commission on Human Rights had determined that it would be difficult to adopt a multi-year work programme due to the range, scope and political nature of its work, as well as unforeseen changes in emphasis and priorities relating to subject matters. Since 1998, the Commission has conducted a debate on a special theme.

70. During 2001, Commissions that developed new, multi-year work programmes or expanded existing ones have to some extent taken into consideration the work programmes of other Commissions, as well as of relevant global events and processes. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women chose priority themes for 2002 and 2003 in relation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the World Summit on the Information Society (2003), and the Statistical Commission will review existing statistical programmes in relation to special years/observances (2003). This continues an established trend that was evident in the work of several Commissions in 2001. For example, the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on the Status of Women focused on themes that related to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001), respectively. The Commission on Human Rights held a special debate on tolerance and respect, in relation to the World Conference against Racism.

71. These efforts should be continued, including by those Commissions that choose annual themes for a special debate. The Council may therefore wish to reiterate its earlier recommendation that coordination and collaboration in preparing work programmes be increased at the planning and formulation stage. To that end, the Council may wish to draw Commissions' attention to table 2 below as a tool for further harmonizing work programmes. Commissions could also request to be provided with comprehensive information about existing multi-year programmes of work when preparing new multi-year work programmes or selecting themes for thematic debates. The Council itself, when selecting themes for its coordination segment, could take into consideration commissions' multi-year work programmes.

72. As in previous years, Commissions' output included resolutions, agreed conclusions and decisions.[3] In some instances, Chairpersons' summaries of discussions, including of expert panels, are included in Commission reports. These are commonly non-negotiated texts.

73. Commissions adopt resolutions, and in some instances also decisions, on matters and issues within their own purview, and also prepare draft resolutions for adoption by the Council or, as the case may be, through the Council by the General Assembly. The practice of doing so differs among commissions, with some Commissions submitting either very few or no draft resolutions on particular issues for action by the Council,[4] and others routinely forwarding draft resolutions for action by the Council or the General Assembly. Given its own heavy workload, these draft resolutions are usually adopted by the Council without discussion.

74. In order to gain a better understanding of the types of issues submitted to it for action, or for transmission to the General Assembly for action, the Council may wish to request that the next consolidated report include an analysis of the practice of Commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Council or

the General Assembly. Such an analysis could assist the Council in encouraging its Commissions consistently to take action on matters that fall within their own purview, while seizing the Council only of those matters that involve its coordination and oversight responsibilities, or that fall within the overall responsibility of the General Assembly.

Table 2
Work programmes of the functional commissions, 2000-2005/6

	Multi-year programme	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005* *2006*
Commission for Social Development	2002-2006	- Contribution of the Commission to the overall review and appraisal of the World Summit on Sustainable Development	-Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world; Role of volunteerism in promoting social development	- Integration of social and economic policy: • Social aspects of macro-economic policies;• Social assessment as a policy tool; • Expenditures in the social sector as a productive factor	- National and international cooperation for social development: • Sharing of experiences and practices in social development; • Forging partnerships for social development; • Social responsibility of the private sector; • Impact of employment strategies on social development; Policies and role of international financial institutions and their effect on national social development strategies	- Improving public sector effectiveness	(for 2005): - Review of further implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (subject to decision of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2001) (for 2006): - Review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)
Commission on Population and Development	2000-2003	- Population, gender and development	- Population, environment and development	- Reproductive rights and reproductive health, with special reference to HIV/AIDS	- Population, education and development		

	Multi-year programme	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005* *2006*
Commission on the Status of Women	2002-2006	Comprehensive review of the Fourth World Conference on Women - Emerging issues	- Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS - Gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular issues related to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	- Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world - Environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters: a gender perspective	- Participation and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women - Women's human rights, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly	- The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality - Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution, and in post-conflict peace-building	(for 2005): - Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (for 2006): - Enhanced participation of women in development; an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and for the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work - Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels

	Multi-year programme	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005 2006*
Commission on Sustainable Development	1998-2002	*Sectoral*: - Integrated planning and management of land resources *Cross-sectoral*: - Financial resources-trade and investment - Economic growth *Economic sector/major group*: - Agriculture - Day of indigenous people	*Sectoral*: - Atmosphere, energy *Cross-sectoral*: - Information for decision-making and participation - International cooperation for an enabling environment *Economic sector/major group*: - Energy, transport	Comprehensive review of Agenda 21			
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	Thematic debate for subsequent year	- International cooperation in combating transnational crime - Conclusions and recs. of the 10th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders	- Progress made in global action against corruption	- Reform of the criminal justice system			
Commission on Narcotic Drugs	2001-2002		- Approaches to building partnerships within and across sectors, including health, education, law enforcement and justice;	- Follow-up to Action plan on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development			

	Multi-year programme	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005 2006*
			- Prevention education and early intervention strategies and trends in drug abuse among children and young people				
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	Theme for inter-sessional period and subsequent session		- National capacity-building in biotechnology with particular attention to agriculture and the agro-industry, health and the environment		- Technology development and capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society		
Statistical Commission	2000-2004	- Labour and compensation statistics - Household income statistics - Gender statistics - National accounts - Capital stock statistics - Expert group on intangibles - Round table on Business Survey Frames - International trade, tourism and finance statistics - International comparison programme - Price statistics - Informal sector and service statistics	- Human settlements statistics - Labour statistics - Gender statistics - Social statistics - National accounts - Capital stock statistics - International trade, price and informal sector statistics - International comparison programme - London Group on Environmental Accounting - Coordination and integration of statistical programmes	- Population and housing censuses - Labour and compensation statistics - Household income, poverty and social statistics - National accounts - Round table on Business Survey Frames - Price, informal sector and service statistics - Environment statistics - Coordination and integration of statistical programmes	- Gender statistics - Social statistics - Drugs - National accounts - Agricultural statistics - International trade and tourism statistics - Finance statistics - International comparison programme - Price statistics - Environment statistics - Coordination and integration of statistical programmes	- Population and housing censuses - Labour and compensation statistics - Household income statistics - Poverty statistics - National accounts - Round table on Business Survey Frames - Informal sector and service statistics - Environmental accounting - Coordination and integration of statistical programmes	

	Multi-year programme	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005 2006*
		- London Group on Environmental Accounting - Coordination and integration of statistical programmes - Programme questions - International economic and social classifications - Special data dissemination standard - Methodological Development Indicators - Follow-up to Council resolutions	- Programme questions - Handbook of statistical organization - UNDP *Human Development Report* - International economic and social classifications - Methodological Development - Review of existing statistical programmes in relation to United Nations special years/observances - Indicators - Follow-up to Council resolutions	- Programme questions - Special data dissemination standard - Information technology - Dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistical Division - Indicators - Follow-up to Council resolutions	- Programme questions - Management issues in national statistical offices - International economic and social classifications - Methodological Development - Review of existing statistical programmes in relation to United Nations special years/observances - Indicators - Follow-up to Council resolutions	- Programme questions - Management issues in national statistical offices - Methodological Development - Information technology - Dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistical Division - Indicators - Follow-up to Council resolutions	
Commission on Human Settlements	Special theme(s) chosen for subsequent session	- Security of tenure - Urban governance	- Urban development and shelter strategies favouring the poor - The rural dimension of sustainable urban development				
Commission on Human Rights	Special debate on a theme		- Tolerance and respect				

B. Working methods, including inter-sessional activities

75. In its resolution 1998/46, the Council encouraged its functional commissions to continue to review their working methods, and made a series of suggestions and recommendations in that regard. The Council also encouraged the Commissions to adopt practices best suited to their mandates, priorities and responsibilities.

76. Functional commissions have, to a large extent, made sustained efforts to improve their working methods, adapting them to the requirements of their mandates and workload. The present practice of each Commission in terms of working methods is summarized in the report of the Secretary-General on the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields (E/2001/INF/3). The following section highlights examples of the Commissions' working methods since the Council's last session, with particular reference to the Council's suggestions and recommendations put forward in resolution 1998/46.

1. In-depth review of working methods

77. Some Commissions considered their working methods in an in-depth manner in 2001. Supported by a report of the Secretary-General containing recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of its working methods (E/CN.6/2001/8), the Commission on the Status of Women discussed this issue and decided to continue to do so at its forty-sixth session. Preparatory work will be undertaken inter-sessionally, and the Commission intends to allocate adequate time to a discussion on this matter. During the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development, several members called for improvements in its methods of work with a view to making its deliberations and consultations more focused, efficient and effective. Prior to the fortieth session of the Commission, the Bureau will undertake a preliminary assessment of the possibilities for improving the Commission's working methods and, in due course, convene inter-sessional open-ended informal consultations on this matter. The Commission on Human Rights improved its working methods by accepting the recommendations of its Bureau regarding issues such as: speaking time and other arrangements for "concerned countries", special procedures, guest speakers, national institutions; submission and introduction of draft resolutions and decisions; written statements submitted by NGOs and questions relating to NGO accreditation.

78. In 2001, two Commissions (the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice) were unable to complete their work during the regular session. The Commission on the Status of Women resumed from 9-11 May to complete its work, while the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will resume from 6 to 7 September 2001 for the same purpose. In addition, the Commission for Social Development decided to consider possible ways of further examining the priority issue of the thirty-ninth session at a future session ("Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world").

2. Inter-sessional activities

79. It is now standard practice of the functional commissions to undertake inter-sessional activities in follow-up to a previous session, as well as in preparation of an

upcoming session. Such inter-sessional activities involve either the Bureau or the entire membership of the commission, or both. The degree of formality of such meetings differs. Some commissions or bureaux meet as may be necessary to move the work forward, while others hold one or a series of scheduled inter-sessional informal meetings.

80. For example, it has been the standard practice of the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development to hold an annual inter-sessional meeting, at which the work of the upcoming session of the Commission is discussed and prepared. The Bureau reports to the Commission in writing, and its report is also introduced orally (see, for example, E/CN.9/2001/CRP.1). The Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women met on a regular basis to plan the Commission's work and to discuss other related issues. The Bureau also held consultative briefings in January and February 2001 on the proposed multi-year programme of work and the recommendations on the enhancement of the effectiveness of the working methods of the Commission. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development met inter-sessionally to consider issues related to the organization of work, the multi-year programme of work and to prepare the session. It also convened open-ended briefings on the preparations and the priority theme of the session. The Commission on Human Settlements has for some time been assisted inter-sessionally by an informal committee of Permanent Representatives. This year, the Commission proposed the formalization of this arrangement by recommending to the Council the establishment of a Committee of Permanent Representatives as an inter-sessional subsidiary body of the Commission to monitor follow-up, and to prepare future sessions of the Commission (see Commission on Human Settlements resolution 18/1 and draft decision for action by the Council).

81. The Statistical Commission has established groups of Member States and international organizations known as "friends of the chair" groups to help advance the Commission's work inter-sessionally. Groups of experts have also been convened for that purpose. These groups provide input into the discussions of various agenda items the Commission takes up at its session. The Commission on Sustainable Development established two ad hoc inter-sessional working groups to prepare draft decisions on the substantive themes of its ninth session.

82. There was a noted increase in the number of inter-sessional meetings of the Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights during 2000-2001, compared to previous years. The Bureau of the fifty-sixth session (2000) held 20 inter-sessional meetings. It also met with the incoming Bureau of the fifty-seventh session (which was elected on the first day of the 2001 session) in preparation for the annual session. The Commission's Bureau always meets as an Expanded Bureau, i.e., the Chair, three Vice-Chairs, and the Rapporteur, as well as the five regional coordinators. The Bureau of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission held its first post-sessional meeting immediately following the conclusion of the session in 2001 in order to highlight some of the issues, including preparations for the fifty-eighth session, which will be addressed during the inter-sessional period, inter alia, main rules and practices followed by the Commission in the organization of its work and the conduct of business; selection of a theme for special debate at the fifty-eighth session; time-management issues; documentation issues; interactive dialogue with special procedures mandate-holders during Commission sessions and relations with the Economic and Social Council and with the other functional commissions.

83. In the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it was felt that much of the success of its session was due in large part to sustained inter-sessional preparation. Five inter-sessional meetings were held between September 2000 and March 2001, and addressed substantive issues related to the normative and operational segments of the agenda as well as organizational matters.

84. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held three inter-sessional meetings, including a pre-consultation meeting immediately before the tenth session, in 2001, which were instrumental in ensuring the smooth organization of work of the session.

3. Panels of experts

85. A number of Commissions now hold in-session panel discussions with experts representing a broad range of expertise and experience, and from different regions, commonly on priority issues identified in multi-year programmes of work or on special themes chosen for consideration from one year to the next. Following the presentations of panellists, Governments usually engage in an interactive debate with them and among themselves. Representatives of NGOs and other stakeholders are usually invited to participate in these discussions.

86. The practice of holding such expert panel discussions was continued by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development on the priority themes of their 2001 sessions. The discussion in the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the central theme of the tenth session was led by panellists' presentations, followed by an interactive dialogue. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs held its first-ever thematic debate, animated by panels of international experts and followed by an interactive discussion between members of the Commission.

87. The Commission on Sustainable Development opened its session with four interactive multi-stakeholder dialogues. Representatives of businesses, NGOs, trade unions, local authorities and the scientific community participated in these dialogues. The high-level segment of the session also opened with a special panel. The Commission on Human Settlements held a very productive dialogue between Governments and Habitat Agenda partners.

88. While the Commission on Population and Development did not hold a panel discussion on the main theme of its session, a lead discussant contributed to the Commission's debate. The work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development was also facilitated by expert presentations on a number of issues.

89. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development prepared its fifth session through the convening of three panels on the main theme chosen for that period. An overview of the outcome of the work of the three panels along with findings and recommendations was submitted to the Commission and served as the basis for its work.

90. Prior to the sessions of the Commissions, several Commission secretariats organized expert group meetings on the substantive themes with the participation of international experts as well as relevant organizations of the United Nations system. These meetings provided inputs to the preparation of the substantive documents for Commissions. Examples of such expert groups include those organized for the

Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission.

4. Sharing of national experience

91. Few Commissions now undertake a systematic effort to share national experience, in particular on major themes of a session. Some Commissions hold short general debates, sometimes with a recommended focus, to highlight national experience.

92. The Commission on Population and Development held a general debate on national experiences in population matters, with a focus on population, environment and development. The Commission for Social Development continued to serve as a forum for exchanging national experiences in the area of social development, including in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

5. Civil society participation

93. Representatives of NGOs and other stakeholders routinely participate in the work of the functional commissions. They participate in general debates, interactive dialogues, as members of panels, during separate NGO segments and in other forms that Commissions find most conducive to their mandates and the particular item under consideration.

94. For example, the Commission on Human Settlements has established a committee of local authorities as an advisory body to serve the purpose of strengthening the dialogue with local authorities worldwide that are involved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. A total of 250 NGOs, consisting of 1,888 participants attended the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights.

6. Role of the Bureau

95. As noted above (see paras. 79-84), Commission bureaux are taking a pro-active role in preparing Commission sessions. This enhanced role of the bureaux has on occasion led to consideration of the best timing for the election of bureaux. Currently, only the Commission on the Status of Women elects its bureau for a two-year term of office.[5] The Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development elect the bureaux of their next session immediately after the conclusion, or at the end of an annual session. All other Commissions elect their bureaux on the first day of a new session. In some instances, and in order to strengthen continuity, Commissions re-elect one or more members of an outgoing bureau to serve on the incoming bureau.

7. Recommendations

96. In the light of the above, the Council may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) The Council may wish to encourage the functional commissions to continue to keep their working methods under review. In particular, it may wish to encourage the Commission on the Status of Women to complete its in-depth review of its working methods, encourage the Commission for Social Development to

proceed with such a review as soon as possible, and also invite the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to assess its working methods. The purpose of such reviews should be to ensure, in future, the timely and successful completion of the annual work programmes of the Commissions. Comprehensive information about the successful working methods of other functional commissions may be useful in undertaking these reviews.

(b) The Council may wish to encourage the Commissions to continue the successful use of panels of experts for the consideration of the main issues and topics on their annual agenda. Commissions may wish to ensure that for such panels, the practice of selecting the highest level of experience and expertise, and from a broad range of geographical areas, is continued. The Council may also emphasize that the panels should provide opportunities for interactive dialogue and debate, and the sharing of insights and innovative solutions to new and persistent challenges in particular areas. The Council may further wish to encourage the practice of including non-negotiated Chairpersons' summaries of such dialogues in the annual reports of the Commissions as a balanced record of the discussion. The summaries included in the reports of the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development could serve as examples.

(c) The Council may wish to urge Commissions to further develop opportunities for sharing national experience during annual sessions, in particular with regard to the implementation of conference outcomes. Such sharing of national experiences could take place on particular issues or topics, and be convened in the form of national presentations of lessons learned, good practices, innovative policies or case studies. Participation of multiple stakeholders, in addition to Governments, in the presentation of such national experiences could be encouraged. Commissions could be encouraged to allocate a certain amount of time for that purpose at their annual sessions.

(d) The Council could encourage its functional commissions to continue to explore opportunities for civil society participation in its work (see also paras. 63-65, and 66 (g) of the present report).

(e) The Council may wish to decide to undertake, in 2002, an assessment of the practice of Commissions to elect their Bureaux and to that end, request the Secretariat to include a summary of the Commissions' views, if any, in the next consolidated report, with a view to harmonizing the process of election of bureaux.

C. Horizontal coordination

97. During the reporting period, functional commissions continued their efforts to increase coordination on issues of common concern by means best suited to their mandates and priorities. Such coordination has taken place through direct contact among commissions, commonly through the Bureaux or Chairpersons, the exchange of reports and other documents, harmonization of work programmes and similar steps. Coordination is frequently also facilitated through cooperation among secretariats of functional commissions, especially in the preparation of documentation and participation of secretariat staff in Commission sessions. Examples of horizontal coordination are summarized below.

1. Interaction among commissions

98. The Commission on Human Settlements has a standing collaborative arrangement with the Commission on Sustainable Development, with a focus on the implementation of Agenda 21. In the preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Human Settlements will assess progress made in the implementation of chapters 7 and 21 of Agenda 21 (on promoting sustainable human settlements development, and on environmentally sound management of solid waste and sewage related issues, respectively), and submit the assessment to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

99. Close links were maintained between the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women. As in previous years, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights. The two Commissions are the only functional commissions whose bureaux meet to discuss issues of mutual interest. A videoconference is scheduled to take place on 21 June 2001. The Commissions are expected to continue coordination on a number of issues, including interaction on their respective confidential communications procedures, and the possibility of joint, or shared reports on questions such as trafficking in women and girls.

100. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs continued to work closely with each other, and have supported increased synergies between the two secretariats.

2. Cooperation at the secretariat level

101. The joint preparation of reports among two or more Commission secretariats, or submission of reports prepared primarily for one commission to another are practices that are gaining ground. The secretariat of the Commission on Human Settlements, i.e., UNCHS (Habitat), as the task manager for the implementation of chapters 7 and 21 of Agenda 21 is preparing the report on the implementation of these two chapters which will also be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) also prepared a report on human settlements statistics for the Statistical Commission (see E/CN.3/2001/2). The report on world population monitoring, 2001: population, environment and development (E/CN.9/2001/2), prepared for the Commission on Population and Development, also serves as input into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

102. A report on capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, prepared by the Centre for International Crime Prevention for the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was also made available to the Commission on Human Rights when it reviewed the question of the death penalty.

103. For a number of years, cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of better coordination of the work of the two Commissions has been reflected in an annual joint work plan (see E/CN.4/2001/70-E/CN.6/2001/3) which is submitted to both Commissions. The Division for the Advancement of Women has followed closely the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development,

in particular the activities of the Gender Advisory Board, a sub-organ of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development established in 1995.

104. All relevant documents and conclusions of the thirty-second session of the Statistical Commission were brought to the attention of the secretariats of other functional commissions on matters of possible interest to their respective Commissions.

105. Close working arrangements continued between the Centre for International Crime Prevention, the secretariat of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the secretariat for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, particularly through the establishment of common field offices and joint services in the area of fund raising, external relations and common secretariat.

3. Secretariat briefings

106. Increasingly, Secretariat representatives are invited to brief Commissions on the work of other Commissions and their secretariats. This was the case in a number of instances in 2001. The Commission on Population and Development was briefed by Secretariat officials of the Divisions for Social Policy and Development, the Advancement of Women, Sustainable Development, the Statistics Division and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. The Commission on Sustainable Development was briefed by the Director of the Statistics Division.

4. Recommendations

107. In the light of the above, the Council may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) The Council, noting that at present only two Commissions (the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights) have established the practice of holding an annual bureau meeting, may wish to encourage other Commissions with related interests to consider holding such meetings, including when necessary via videoconference. Such bureau meetings could be used to discuss both procedural questions (working methods, multi-year work programmes or themes for special debates, joint or shared report preparation, participation of civil society, etc.), as well as substantive and policy questions in areas of common interest.

(b) The Council may wish to encourage Commissions to share more systematically the outcome of their work, including through communications among Chairpersons summarizing the main outcomes of their annual sessions, the possibility of inviting Chairpersons of other commissions to address an annual session, or participation of a Chairperson (or Bureau member) to participate in informal presentations or briefings organized in conjunction with an annual session.

(c) The Council may wish to encourage its functional commissions to request more joint reports from their secretariats, or to request submission, on related topics, of the same report to two or more commissions. The report on capital punishment can serve as an example in this regard.

(d) The Council may wish to encourage other functional commissions to follow the example of the Commission on Population and Development and invite

Secretariat representatives servicing other functional commissions to provide briefings on issues of common interest.

D. Vertical coordination

108. In its resolution 1998/46 (annex II, para. 16), the Council had encouraged "the bureaux of the functional commissions, along with the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, ... to enhance coordination, in particular through regular meetings whenever necessary". The following section describes the links between the functional commissions and the Economic and Social Council.

109. In 2001, the Council Bureau met with the bureaux of each of the functional commissions. These meetings took place either at United Nations Headquarters in New York or were held via videoconference with Commissions that convene in other locations (Nairobi, Vienna and Geneva).

110. While the Council Bureau in general proposed three main issues for discussion in the joint bureau meetings,[6] the scope of the meetings varied depending on the issues of greatest concern to the Commissions.

111. The joint meetings took place in a spirit of common purpose and desire to contribute to the achievement of the overall development goals in the economic, social and related fields. There was a general sense of the usefulness of these once-yearly coordination meetings between the Council and its Commissions, which also greatly contributed to a better sense of the issues dealt with by the Council and its commissions during the course of a year. This improved information exchange had also increased an appreciation that the Council and the Commissions did not work in isolation from each other, but rather could benefit from each other's efforts, and mutually reinforce the policies and action strategies each developed in their area of responsibility.

1. Input to the substantive session of 2001 of the Council

112. While recognizing the importance of contributing to the themes of the substantive session of the Council, it was also noted that a number of Commissions now implement multi-year programmes of work. As a consequence, Commissions had less flexibility to change topics chosen well in advance. Furthermore, the provisional agendas of Commissions were usually prepared before the Council selected the themes for its high-level and coordination segments.

113. In several joint meetings, bureaux members highlighted specific recent outputs of Commissions which the Council could take into consideration during its high-level segment in 2001. For example, the Council's attention was drawn to several commitments in the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (Copenhagen+5), particularly on poverty eradication and resource mobilization, which were considered highly relevant in this regard. The Council was also invited to take into account the enormous potential of biotechnology for supporting national efforts in food security, improved health and environmental sustainability in Africa. While the report on the world population monitoring, 2001: population, environment and development (E/CN.9/2001/2) covered all countries of the world, particular attention was given to Africa concerning the effects of HIV/AIDS in the region, and could thus contribute to the

Council's work. A panel discussion on human settlements issues in Africa was expected to provide input to the high-level segment. The task of intensifying the fight against drugs in Africa was an important issue to be considered, as was the impact of crime on development, particularly within the context of deprivation of resources for societies, which resulted in an impediment to development, particularly in Africa. The Council's attention was also drawn to the need to include a gender perspective into all aspects of this segment.

114. With regard to the Council's 2001 coordination segment, follow-up undertaken by Commissions in 2001 to the Council's Ministerial Declaration of 2000 were highlighted and Commissions' future plans in the area of ICT were discussed. Of ongoing concern was the use of ICT by organized crime as well as ICT's potential for fighting criminal activities. In the area of science and technology for development, *Knowledge Societies: Information Technology for Sustainable Development*[7] contained comprehensive guidelines for national ICT strategies. The ongoing technical work on indicators and their contribution to the Council's work was stressed.

2. Follow-up to conferences

115. The importance of an effective and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits was stressed in a number of joint meetings (for the views of Commissions on this question, see E/2001/73). Several bureaux noted their Commissions' contributions, or intention to contribute, to events, including the World Assembly on Ageing, the special sessions of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and on children, and the World Summit on the Information Society.

3. Working methods

116. Several bureaux briefed the Council on improvements in their working methods and conduct of business, and the positive experience gained in this regard. Some Commissions drew attention to their extremely heavy workloads, and how best to improve these in the light of a proliferation of themes for discussion, and the complexity of the topics covered. Opportunities for developing cooperative links with the newly established United Nations Forum on Forests were also discussed. The relationship with NGOs, especially during the sessions of Commissions, was reviewed.

117. In addition to increased interaction with commission secretariats, bureaux underlined the usefulness of the participation and contribution of other entities of the United Nations system to the work of the Commissions, including the regional commissions.

4. Recommendations

118. In the light of the above, the Council may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) In order to strengthen coordination among Commissions, as well as between the Council and the Commissions, the Council may wish to support the participation of Commission Chairpersons during the Council's consideration of the consolidated report in its general segment, for example, through an introductory panel presentation by Commission Chairpersons (or their designated alternate), and

subsequent dialogue with the Council. Such an annual dialogue could focus on some of the main trends, issues and approaches identified in the consolidated report (see part I of the present report), and could also raise common concerns with regard to working methods.

(b) The Council may wish to encourage the Commissions to provide concise, action-oriented input to its annual high-level and coordination segments. This would be greatly facilitated if the Council were to choose the topics for these two segments as early as possible, preferably during its substantive session. Commissions could be encouraged to use, as applicable, their standing agenda item on new trends and emerging issues to elaborate such input (see E/2001/73, para. 50, on use of item on new and emerging trends).

(c) In order to facilitate Commissions' follow-up to the policy guidance that emanates from the Council's substantive session, the Council may wish to encourage the respective secretariats to provide concise notes on actions already planned or undertaken by their Commissions, or to propose steps that Commissions could take in follow-up to Council guidance. The notes prepared for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission could serve as examples.

119. The two recommendations contained in paragraphs 71 and 74 are also relevant to strengthening coordination among the Commissions and between the Council and the Commissions.

Notes

[1] These were of specific relevance to the Commission on Human Settlements as they dealt with the coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda.

[2] The Commission on Science and Technology for Development is at present the only Commission that meets every other year. In a draft resolution before the Council, the Council would decide that the Commission should meet annually. The draft does not indicate when this change in periodicity would come into effect. (Draft resolution III in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.) The Commission on Human Settlements is a standing committee of the Council.

[3] The Commissions' resolutions and decisions, including draft resolutions for action by the Council, are contained in the reports of the Commissions to the Council.

[4] Commissions' provisional agendas for the subsequent session are always submitted to the Council for action.

[5] In the Statistical Commission, elections are held annually in accordance with the rules of procedure, but Bureau members are expected to be re-elected and serve for two years.

[6] Follow-up by functional commissions to Council guidance; possible contribution by the Commissions to the work of the Council in 2001 (high-level and coordination segments); and enhancement of an integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to, the major United Nations conferences and summits.

[7] *Knowledge Societies: Information Technology for Sustainable Development*, Robin Mansell and Uta Wehn, eds. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), for the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Annex

Joint Meetings held in 2001 between the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the bureaux of its functional commissions

Functional commission	*Date of meeting*
Statistical Commission	9 March 2001
Commission on Human Settlements (via videoconference New York/Nairobi)	15 March 2001
Commission on Narcotic Drugs (via videoconference New York/Vienna)	28 March 2001
Commission on Population and Development	5 April 2001
Commission on Sustainable Development	26 April 2001
Commission on the Status of Women	2 May 2001
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (via videoconference New York/Vienna)	15 May 2001
Commission for Social Development	25 May 2001
Commission on Science and Technology for Development (via videoconference New York/Geneva)	31 May 2001
Commission on Human Rights (via videoconference New York/Geneva)	18 June 2001

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Coordination, programme and other questions: international cooperation in the field of informatics

International cooperation in the field of informatics

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report summarizes action taken by the United Nations Secretariat and its funds and programmes in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/58 of 30 July 1999, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on initiatives taken by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics. The resolution reiterated the high priority attached to easy, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access for States Members of the United Nations and observers, through, inter alia, their permanent missions, to the growing number of computerized databases and information systems and services of the United Nations. Further, the resolution underscores the importance of improving electronic connectivity via the Internet for all Member States as well as electronic mail links between the Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system.

2. The present report reflects the various activities in the field of informatics reported by the departments of the United Nations Secretariat and its funds and programmes.

II. Activities of the technical subgroup of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics

3. Since July 2000, the technical subgroup has held meetings to discuss and address a wide range of issues related to information technologies, which are set out below.

* E/2001/100.

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4. *The Information and Communication Technologies Task Force*. One of the major activities of the Working Group during the past year was to fulfil the mandate contained in the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, adopted by the Council on 7 July 2000,[1] to submit recommendations for the design and composition of the proposed Information and Communication Technologies Task Force. The members agreed that the mandate of the Task Force should be concise, giving some idea of what the preferred outcome should be. The Task Force should also bridge the constraints that prevented agencies from being innovative and fast-acting and should ensure that there is follow-up to further shape the objectives and mandate, including the terms of reference, of the Task Force. The Working Group recommended that the Secretary-General hold consultations with all the stakeholders regarding the composition and administration of the Task Force and the trust fund. Finally, in order to create a link to the Economic and Social Council, the Working Group decided to request the Secretary-General to report to the Council the results of his consultations with stakeholders.

5. At the end of its deliberations, the Working Group produced a draft resolution that, in its annex, established the directives for the operation of the Task Force, which was adopted by the Council on 28 July 2000 as resolution 2000/29.

6. *Global implications of the year 2000 problem*. Recalling its many endeavours that resulted in the successful year 2000 roll-over among Member States and the Secretariat, the Working Group approved a preliminary version of a resolution drafted by the Secretariat entitled "Global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers", which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 55/21 of 10 November 2000.

7. *Working with the Association for Information Technology*. The Working Group worked with the Association for Information Technology (AIT) to sponsor breakfast meetings in January, April and June 2001 at the permanent missions of Australia, Denmark and Germany. The purpose of the breakfasts was to engage the United Nations diplomatic community, at as high a level as possible, in the crucial task of investigating the impact of information and communication technologies on various economic and social agendas of interest to the international community. Underlying the value of the meetings is the belief that the digital divide needs to be addressed by all States Members of the United Nations and that it is proper for ambassadors to reflect on that belief so that they can keep pace with the information and communication technologies revolution sweeping the world. In that way they can better participate in the global debate on the subject.

8. The Working Group also worked with AIT to convene a conference on information security at United Nations Headquarters on 30 March. Five hundred representatives of Member States, United Nations departments, and the private sector attended the conference.

9. *Reaching out to other United Nations agencies*. Continuing its efforts to establish relationships with other United Nations agencies, the Working Group invited a representative from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to brief members on how lawyers in the United Nations system were using information and communication technologies. The representative reported that as the Tribunal became more involved with cases and writing rules, it became apparent that there was a need to improve the process by employing current technology. Members had observed how technology was successfully being used by certain national courts in

Australia, the United States of America and other Member States and was working to bring those benefits to the Tribunal.

10. *Improving the speed of access to Member States.* The Working Group addressed the question of improving the speed of Internet access to Member States. To that end, the Information Technology Services Division outlined the issues that would be involved in such an undertaking, as follows:

(a) The current dial-up connection was dependent on available modems and circuits, which had an optimum speed of 56 kilobytes per second. That speed was adequate if large files were not being transmitted. However, when large amounts of data were transmitted the limitations of the modems were quite apparent. To overcome this limitation, the Information Technology Services Division researched the possibility of procuring digital subscriber line (DSL) connections for the missions from a commercial provider at retail cost. The Division advised that there would be security issues connected with the use of DSL connectivity, and advised that caution be used in deciding which data to store on the device used for the connection. In addition, there were potential problems with the use of DSL companies' help desk and the inability of the United Nations missions' help desk to resolve the problems due to its lack of familiarity with the proprietary systems;

(b) The Information Technology Services Division worked with the service provider to overcome the limitations of the Internet infrastructure at United Nations Headquarters by tripling the Internet capacity at Headquarters. The internal infrastructure of the United Nations was upgraded to include five T1 lines, which enabled the United Nations to be the Internet service provider for Member States. In April 2001 the missions were migrated to the United Nations service. Further improvements to the Internet infrastructure at Headquarters have continued into the middle of 2001 with the installation of a T3 line to further enlarge the capacity of Internet connections and the added option of future enhancement.

11. *Internet and email service.* The Working Group and the Information Technology Services Division addressed concerns about the underutilization of services provided by the United Nations to Member States. A questionnaire was sent to Member States requesting information on their use of the various services provided by the United Nations. It was reported that of the 189 questionnaires mailed, 81 responses were received, representing 40 per cent of the target group. Based on the results of the survey, the Division will research the acquisition of bulk-rate DSL service for Member States.

12. *Using technology to produce clean copies of documentation during negotiations of the General Assembly.* The Working Group also considered discussing how data recorded in meetings would be overseen and managed. In the interim, the Information Technology Services Division would provide personal computers in conference rooms on an ad hoc basis until a decision was taken on a permanent solution.

13. *New mandate for the Working Group.* The Working Group held several discussions regarding its future activities and mandate. It contemplated changing its mandate under the terms stated in paragraph 19 of the ministerial declaration,[1] which called for a review by the Economic and Social Council of the mandates and activities of its subsidiary bodies dealing with information and communication technology. It was expected that the establishment of the Information and

Communication Technologies Task Force would determined what the future of the Working Group would be.

III. Action taken by the Secretariat in response to issues raised in the Working Group

A. Activities of the Information Technology Services Division of the Office of Central Support Services

14. The Information Technology Services Division, in its effort to fulfil the mandate of providing connectivity to all permanent missions, cooperated with the technical subgroup of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics to stabilize and improve the Internet service offered. To that end, the following main activities were carried out:

(a) As mentioned above, in April 2001 the United Nations migrated all dial-up access from an outside Internet service provider to an in-house dial-up Internet facility supported by T1 and T3 lines for the use of all permanent and observer missions. This improvement will allow Member States to work more efficiently and effectively with electronic tools. The Division configured at least one computer in each mission with the new access information. Permanent missions were notified of the complete phase-out of access to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) system;

(b) More than 500 Internet connection accounts have been provided to missions and their personnel. In addition, each mission may request an unlimited number of email accounts. Currently, the missions' server (un.int) hosts approximately 1,150 individual email accounts. All permanent missions are now accessible through a uniform email address system;

(c) The support provided to missions includes facilities that were created to protect their mail operations from being disrupted in case of a planned or accidental flood of messages from the outside so that they can continue their daily routine. The Information Technology Services Division installed additional security measures to prevent "spamming" (unsolicited email) and unauthorized access to email accounts. The Division also responded to the request of Member States for virus protection by extending the United Nations contract to include the missions. A request for a two-year renewal of licences was recently processed by the Division, with the stipulation that the vendor must be able to maintain the current pricing for at least two years for all permanent missions, offices and agencies worldwide, with no minimum purchase limits for each order;

(d) The hosting of mission web sites on the un.int server has increased during the past year. Each mission has the option of updating the web sites using the access code provided for either the Microsoft FrontPage or file transfer protocol software. There are now 114 web sites on the server, which receives about 34,000 visits each day;

(e) The Division continued to provide technical advice and secretariat support to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics by attending their bimonthly meetings and providing members with updates on new technology;

(f) A total of 1,357 personal computers and printers accrued from the Organization's personal computer replacement programme were donated to permanent missions;

(g) The Division continued to provide access to the optical disk system (ODS). There are now 192 permanent and observer missions with 1,109 users, at the missions themselves and in their capitals, using the ODS facility;

(h) Help desk support continues to be provided to permanent missions from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on normal United Nations workdays. From July 2000 to June 2001, the missions' help desk received 2,119 calls for technical support.

15. The Division continued to maintain 24 computers in the Delegates' Lounge and the first basement of the Secretariat Building. They have direct access to the Internet and are provided for the use of delegations only. The Division continued to ensure their full availability by carrying out routine inspections of all devices twice a day.

B. Informatics activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Policy coordination

16. During the past year the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has supported the pivotal role of the Economic and Social Council in the area of information and communication technology for development. As mentioned above, a ministerial declaration was adopted in July 2000[1] on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy. The Council has been a major driving force behind the ground-breaking initiative to set up an Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, which will enable the United Nations system to bring together the information technology community and the development community to develop innovative approaches for bringing information and communication technologies capacity to the developing world.

17. The Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, to which the Department provides substantive support, will hold its first meeting in early September to approve a plan of action and road map for implementation. The Department has worked very closely with UNDP and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships during the past months in developing a viable strategy for the Task Force.

18. The Department will further assist the Council in examining, during this year's coordination segment, the role of the United Nations in promoting development with respect to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies, through, inter alia, partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. Further information can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/itforum/ict.htm.

Application development

19. The Statistics Division provided access to UNSTATS, its massive database of statistical data, through the Internet and Intranet. The database was compiled in collaboration with more than 30 international organizations. Country profiles have

been added in several areas, including social indicators (based on the minimum national social data set). Following successful access deployment to the regional commissions last fall, UNSTATS has been made available to all staff at major United Nations offices in New York, including UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, and in the field to UNDP resident coordinators' offices and United Nations information centres. The address of the public site is at http://unstats.un.org.

20. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs further developed the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). The system was developed to assist senior-level staff in tracking the implementation of programme outputs and in meeting the performance reporting requirements of the General Assembly. The pilot version of IMDIS was adopted for use by 10 substantive departments in the biennium 1998-1999, both in New York and at offices away from Headquarters. According to a report of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1998-1999, IMDIS has played an important role in strengthening intra-departmental discipline in performance monitoring and in facilitating the flow of management information from the bottom up (A/55/73, para. 11). Based on this achievement, IMDIS was extended at the request of the Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Department of Management, to facilitate the initial formulation of programme plans. Those plans will then serve as the basis for later monitoring and performance analysis. The address of the production site is http://imdis.un.org.

Communications

21. The Department utilized Internet technologies to build communities of practice, support its technical cooperation work and consult with civil society. The Division for Public Economics and Public Administration set up the Global Online Network on Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN). UNPAN provides online information services, such as information on United Nations programmes and projects on public policies, public administration and finance, best practices and relevant experiences at the regional, national and local levels. It provides online training programmes, materials, facilities, advisory services, interactive questions and answers, the UNPAN help desk, conference and workshops and worldwide directories in public administration and finance. The Internet address of the site is http://www.unpan.org.

22. The Population Division has developed DemoNetA to facilitate the exchange of research information among demographic centres of Africa and DemoNetAsia for Asia. The Division for the Advancement of Women has made extensive use of only conferencing facilities to conduct a series of online consultations on issues identified for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995. The secretariat of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Mexico in 2002, has established an interactive site (http://www.un.org/esa/ffd) to solicit and receive feedback from the international community on the financing for development process. The Division for Sustainable Development has built the Johannesburg Summit web site as a major locus of information exchange and preparation for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The address is http://www.johannesburgsummit.org.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 17.